



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2011

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## Summary

### Main Features

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#### INTRODUCTION

This publication presents estimates of the prevalence of homelessness from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing together with selected estimates from 2001 and 2006 published for comparison. More detailed estimates for 2001 and 2006 were published on 11 September 2011 in Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006 (cat. no. 2049.0).

Estimates of homelessness from the 2011 Census use the same methodology as previously applied in compiling the 2001 and 2006 estimates. An overview of that methodology is in Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology. For more information, see Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001). The ABS definition of homelessness is in Appendix 1: Definition of Homelessness. For more information on the definition see Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ABS acknowledges and thanks the service providers and their staff who once again worked with the ABS to help maximise the overall quality of the enumeration of the homeless population in the 2011 Census.

#### SMALL AREA ESTIMATES

Datacubes for Statistical Area Level (SA2 - SA4), where data are available, are included in the Downloads tab of this issue on the ABS website.

#### REMOTENESS

Datacubes for remoteness, based on the 2006 Australian Remoteness Index for Areas, are included in the Downloads tab of this issue on the ABS website.

## **ROUNDING**

As estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals. As estimates have also been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential information, discrepancies may occur in estimates appearing in more than one table.

## **INQUIRIES**

For further information about these and related statistics, contact Living Conditions on (02) 6252 6174, or email [living.conditions@abs.gov.au](mailto:living.conditions@abs.gov.au).

# **Summary of Findings**

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Homelessness is not just the result of too few houses. Its causes are many and varied. Domestic violence, a shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown and drug and alcohol abuse all contribute to the level of homelessness in Australia (FaHCSIA, 2008). Homelessness is not a choice. Homelessness is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in the community, and one of the most important markers of social exclusion (Department of Human Services, 2002).

Effective targeting of policies and services for reducing homelessness and allowing all Australians to participate in society requires transparent, consistent and repeatable statistics. However, there are many dimensions to homelessness, and different statistics are needed for different purposes.

Prevalence estimates (of how many people experienced homelessness at a particular point-in-time) allow society to judge the scale of homelessness, and can be used to report trends and to target services to prevent or ameliorate the circumstances of homelessness through knowing both the locations of the homeless and their characteristics.

While homelessness itself is not a characteristic that is directly collected in the Census of Population and Housing, estimates of the homeless population may be derived from the Census using analytical techniques based on both the characteristics observed in the Census and assumptions about the way people may respond to Census questions.

This publication presents estimates of the prevalence of homelessness, and the characteristics and living arrangements of those likely to be homeless, on Census night 2011 and compares those estimates to 2006 and 2001. Estimates are also provided for people whose living arrangements are close to the statistical boundary of homelessness, but who are not classified as homeless.

For some groups of people, Census variables provide limited opportunity to estimate those likely to be homeless. Three key groups are: homeless youth; homeless people displaced due to domestic and family violence; and homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Notwithstanding the limitations of the Census variables for the analysis of

homelessness, the estimates presented in this publication have been compiled on a generally consistent basis so that they can be compared over time to track increases or decreases in homelessness. Any unavoidable inconsistencies in methodology are described and broadly quantified so that users can understand any limitations in comparisons over time.

An overview of the ABS methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census is provided in Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology. For more information, see **Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

The ABS definition of homelessness underpins the methodology used to compile the ABS estimates of homelessness. An overview of the definition is provided in Appendix 1: Definition of Homelessness. Under the ABS definition, a person is homeless if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate, or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

For more information on the ABS definition of homelessness see **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0).

## KEY RESULTS

The key homelessness estimates from the 2011 Census are:

- there were 105,237 people enumerated in the Census who are classified as being homeless on Census night (up from 89,728 in 2006);
- the homeless rate was 49 persons for every 10,000 persons enumerated in the 2011 Census, up 8% from the 45 persons in 2006 but down on the 51 persons in 2001;
- the homelessness rate rose by 20% or more in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, with the largest fall being in the Northern Territory down 8%;
- most of the increase in homelessness between 2006 and 2011 was reflected in people living in severely crowded dwellings, up from 31,531 in 2006 to 41,390 in 2011;
- the number of people spending Census night in supported accommodation for the homeless in 2011 was 21,258, up from 17,329 in 2006;
- there were 17,721 homeless people in boarding houses on Census night in 2011, up from 15,460 in 2006;
- the number of homeless people in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out in 2011 was 6,813, down from 7,247 in 2006;
- about three quarters of the increase in the homelessness estimate was accounted for by people who were born overseas;
- there was little change in the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were homeless (up 3% to 26,744 in 2011);
- 60% of homeless people in 2011 were aged under 35 years, and 22% of the increase in homelessness was in the 25 to 34 years age group (up 22% to 19,311 homeless people in 2011);
- the male homelessness rate fell slightly to 56 males per 10,000 males enumerated in the 2011 Census, while the rate rose slightly for females to 42 per 10,000 females; and
- among those people who were not classified as being homeless on Census night but were living in some form of marginal housing and may be at risk of homelessness, the

number of people living in improvised dwellings fell sharply, down 42% to 4,504 people in 2011, the number of people marginally housed in caravan parks was little changed (at 12,963 people in 2011), while the number of people living in crowded dwellings requiring three extra bedrooms jumped 41% to 60,875 in 2011.

The following table presents the time series of homelessness estimates for the six operational groups for 2001, 2006 and 2011.

### 1.1 Persons by homeless Operational Groups, 2001, 2006 and 2011

	2001 no.	%	2006 no.	%	2011 no.	%
Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleepers out	8 946	9	7 247	8	6 813	6
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	13 420	14	17 329	19	21 258	20
Persons staying temporarily with other households	17 880	19	17 663	20	17 369	17
Persons staying in boarding houses	21 300	22	15 460	17	17 721	17
Persons in other temporary lodging	338	-	500	1	686	1
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	33 430	35	31 531	35	41 390	39
<b>All homeless persons</b>	<b>95 314</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>89 728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>105 237</b>	<b>100</b>

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

### **Severe overcrowding**

People living in 'severely' crowded dwellings (i.e. usual residents of dwellings which needed four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate them adequately) have been the largest homeless group in each of the last 3 Censuses. While the number of people in this group fell slightly between 2001 and 2006, it jumped 31% (or 9,857 people) to 41,390 in 2011 and accounted for most of the rise in homelessness. Two thirds of the rise in 'severe' crowding is attributable to a doubling of the number of people in this homelessness group who were born overseas. In 2011 there were 5,915 people in severely crowded dwellings who were born overseas and who had arrived in Australia in 2006 or earlier, similar to the total number of all overseas born people in this homeless group in 2006. However, in 2011 there were an additional 6,265 people born overseas that arrived in Australia after 2006 and were living in 'severely' crowded dwellings on Census night.

People arriving from China, New Zealand, Afghanistan and India accounted for about half the rise in the overseas born estimate for this homelessness group.

Overseas born homeless people in 'severely' crowded dwellings accounted for more than half the rise in homelessness in both the 19 to 24 years age group and in the 25 to 34 years age group.

### **Supported accommodation**

After severe crowding, supported accommodation for the homeless was the largest homeless group in 2011, accounting for 20% of homeless people on Census night. There were 21,258 people in supported accommodation in 2011, up 23% on 2006. While Victoria was still the jurisdiction with the largest number of people in supported accommodation, its share had slipped a little due to stronger rises in both New South Wales and Queensland.

While supported accommodation accounts for 20% of the homeless in 2011, it accounts for 31% of homeless children aged under 12 years, and 28% of youth aged 12 to 18 years.

There were slightly more females than males in supported accommodation in 2011, while across all other homeless groups males outnumber females by 39%.

Indigenous people were over represented generally in the 2011 homelessness estimates (25%) and in supported accommodation (15%). However, in supported accommodation the not stated rate for Indigenous status is double that for all homelessness and may mask an even higher proportion of Indigenous people in supported accommodation.

See Appendix 4 for a comparison of ABS Census based estimates of people in supported accommodation and estimates from the new Specialist Homelessness Services Collection conducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

### ***Boarding houses***

There were 17,721 homeless people in boarding houses on Census night in 2011, up 15% on the estimate for 2006 but still well down on the 21,300 estimate for 2001.

The homeless boarding house population is overwhelmingly male (75%), and much older than the rest of the homeless population - 46% of the boarding house homeless population is aged 45 years and over, compared to 22% of the other homeless groups being of that age.

See Appendix 2 on methodology which describes some changes for the boarding house estimates that may account for some of the rise between 2006 and 2011.

### ***Homeless and staying temporarily in other households***

The 17,369 homeless people staying as visitors temporarily in other households and who reported no usual address accounted for 17% of the homeless population in 2011, and was down slightly on the estimate for 2006. This group includes homeless people staying as visitors with friends and relatives and people who were homeless in 'visitor only' households where none of the persons present on Census night usually lived in that dwelling.

This visitor homeless group reflects the average male / female ratio of all homeless people in 2011 (56% to 44%), and while younger than the boarding house population is older than either the supported accommodation or severely crowded groups (35% of this homeless group were aged over 45 years and older).

As noted in the introduction, some groups, in particular youth, those escaping domestic and family violence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are likely to be underestimated in this category of homelessness because, despite their homelessness, a usual address may be reported for them on Census night and therefore they cannot be distinguished from people who were visitors on Census night and who were not homeless.

### ***Improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out***

There were 6,813 homeless people in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out in 2011, down 6% on 2006. Males are over represented in this homeless group (68%) as are Indigenous Australians (25%).

### ***States and Territories***

In 2011, there were similar rates of homelessness in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland (ranging from 41 to 46 homeless persons per 10,000 persons), while South Australia and Tasmania had the lowest rates (38 and 32 homeless persons per

10,000 persons). While the Northern Territory had the highest rate of homelessness in Australia in 2011 (731 persons homeless per 10,000 persons), this was an improvement on the homelessness rate in 2006 of 792.

## **1.2 Rate of homeless persons per 10,000 of the population, by State and Territory of usual residence - 2001, 2006 and 2011**

<b>States and Territories</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>
New South Wales	36.4	33.9	40.8
Victoria	38.9	35.3	42.6
Queensland	54.8	48.3	45.8
South Australia	39.8	37.0	37.5
Western Australia	53.6	42.3	42.8
Tasmania	27.5	24.0	31.9
Northern Territory	904.4	791.7	730.7
Australian Capital Territory	30.4	29.3	50.0
<b>Australia</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>48.9</b>

In the Northern Territory, 85% of the homeless were in 'severely' crowded dwellings in 2011. Severe crowding in the other states and territories ranged between 12% in Tasmania to 43% in Western Australia. Compared to other states and territories, the Northern Territory also had a high rate of homeless persons in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out at 40 per 10,000 persons. The next highest rates were in Western Australia and Queensland (each 4 per 10,000 persons).

The rates of people in supported accommodation for the homeless were highest in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory (31 and 27 persons respectively per 10,000 of their populations). The rates in supported accommodation were lower in the other jurisdictions, ranging from 4 persons per 10,000 in WA to 15 in Victoria.

### **Youth**

Most of the homeless youth aged 12-18 years in 2011 were in 'severely' crowded dwellings (56%) or in supported accommodation for the homeless (28%). While 8% of homeless people aged 12-18 years were staying temporarily with other households, this proportion increases to 14% for youth aged 19-24 years.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples made up 2.5% of the Australian population in 2011. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians accounted for 25% of all persons who were homeless on Census night in 2011 (26,744). Of those who were classified as homeless, 75% were living in 'severely' crowded dwellings (the same proportion as in 2006), 12% were in supported accommodation for the homeless and 6% were in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out. For non-Indigenous homeless persons, 30% were living in 'severely' crowded dwellings, 20% were in supported accommodation, and 7% were in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out.

The estimate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were homeless on Census night is likely to be an underestimate, particularly for those staying temporarily with other households, reflecting both a relatively large underenumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in the Census and because for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians a usual address may be reported that is associated with a 'place'

rather than with a home or dwelling (see Explanatory Notes for more information).

### ***Marginally housed and at risk of homelessness***

People who were not classified as being homeless on Census night but were living in some form of marginal housing and may be at risk of homelessness are people whose living arrangements are close to the statistical boundary of homelessness. The number of people marginally housed and living in improvised dwellings fell sharply, down 42% to 4,504 people in 2011, the number of people marginally housed in caravan parks was little changed (at 12,963 people in 2011), while the number of people living in crowded dwellings requiring three extra bedrooms jumped 41% to 60,875 in 2011.

As in 2006, for the marginally housed population living in other crowded dwellings the rate in 2011 was highest in the Northern Territory with 244 per 10,000 persons, followed by New South Wales (32) and Victoria (25).

#### **1.3 Persons living in other crowded dwellings, Rate per 10,000 of the population - 2011**

New South Wales	32.0
Victoria	25.4
Queensland	24.8
South Australia	18.5
Western Australia	23.2
Tasmania	12.0
Northern Territory	243.6
Australian Capital Territory	13.5
<b>Australia</b>	<b>28.3</b>

## **REFERENCES**

Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2008) **The Road Home. A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness**, FaHCSIA, Canberra.

Department of Human Services Victoria (2002) **Victorian Homelessness Strategy: Action Plan and Strategic Framework**, Victoria, Melbourne.

## **Homelessness Statistics - Q&A and Factsheets**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This publication presents estimates of the prevalence of homelessness from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing together with selected estimates from 2001 and 2006 published for comparison. More detailed estimates for 2001 and 2006 were published on 11 September 2011 in Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006 (cat. no. 2049.0).

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Below are commonly asked questions relating to homelessness statistics and answers to these questions. Factsheets on key areas of interest relating to homeless:

- Youth homelessness
- Overcrowding
- Domestic and Family violence
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **WHAT IS THE ABS' DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS?**

The ABS has developed a statistical definition of homelessness. Details of the definition is in Information Paper – A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0).

In brief, the ABS statistical definition is that:

When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The ABS definition of homelessness is informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'home'lessness, not rooflessness. It emphasises the core elements of 'home' in Anglo American and European interpretations of the meaning of home as identified in research evidence (Mallett, 2004). These elements may include: a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space. Homelessness is therefore a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'.

The definition has been constructed from a conceptual framework centred around the following elements:

- Adequacy of the dwelling;
- Security of tenure in the dwelling; and
- Control of, and access to space for social relations.

The ABS definition of homelessness will be used to produce statistics on homelessness from a range of ABS collections. This includes prevalence estimates of homelessness from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing, and from household surveys such as the General Social Survey, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Personal Safety Survey, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, and other surveys, as



appropriate.

This definition can also be used by other organisations to collect and output their statistics in line with the ABS definition and ABS statistical outputs.

More information on the development of an ABS definition can be found in Factsheet: Homelessness - in concept and in some measurement contexts.

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## **HOW DOES THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS RELATE TO THE METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS?**

Comparable quality statistics over time and across data sources, require a clear conceptual framework and definition that underpins operationalisation of that definition in multiple collections, including fine tuning those datasets for that purpose.

The methodology for use in the Census can only partially operationalise the definition because although the Census is designed for many purposes, it is limited in the nature of the questions it can ask that will reflect on homelessness. While the information derivable from the Census for homelessness measurement will improve over time, nevertheless some proxies will always need to be developed for some elements of the definition for some of the different homeless operational groups that can be output from the Census. Details on how each of the homeless groups relate to the definition can be found in Appendix 1: Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011 (cat. no. 2049.0).

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## **WHAT OTHER DATA CAN I USE TO HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND HOMELESSNESS?**

In addition to prevalence estimates of homelessness from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing, the ABS has collected previous experiences of homelessness from the 2010 General Social Survey (GSS), published in September 2011. In March 2012, the ABS released an article titled Life after homelessness in the publication Australian Social Trends (cat. no. 4102.0) drawing on those GSS results. The article examines a range of socio-economic indicators of those who had experienced at least one episode of homelessness in the 10 years prior to the survey, but were no longer homeless.

An improved homelessness module has also been included in the 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. The ABS expects to also include this module, further developed, in the 2014 General Social Survey. The ABS will consider developing a culturally appropriate module for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. The ABS will also be collecting experiences of homelessness for people who leave a violent partner through the Personal Safety Survey.

The ABS will also investigate using the 5% Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD) to undertake longitudinal analysis of the circumstances of those who have been identified as likely to be homeless. The circumstances of people identified as likely to be homeless on the 2011 SLCD can then be compared with their circumstances in 2006, and into the future it should be possible to report on repeat periods of homelessness and long term outcomes as seen in the SLCD. It will also be possible to compare these results, for those likely to be homeless, with the rest of the population.

There are also non-ABS sources of information about homelessness, such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Specialist Homeless Services collection, and the FaHCSIA funded Melbourne Institute Study: **Journeys Home: Longitudinal Study of Factors Affecting Housing Stability**.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENUMERATION AND ESTIMATION AND HOW DO THESE EFFECT ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS?

In summary, the main limitations with using Census data to estimate homelessness can be summarised as:

- under / over **estimation** - people were enumerated in the Census but the data collected about them is not sufficient to be certain about whether or not they were homeless on Census night;
- under-**enumeration** - people who were not enumerated in the Census.

Observing homeless people in any data collection is a challenge, and their homeless circumstance may mean that these people are not captured at all in datasets used to count people generally. And not all homeless people will be enumerated in data sets of those homeless people accessing particular services for the homeless. The 2010 ABS General Social Survey 2010 found that of those who had had an experience of homelessness in the last ten years and who were no longer homeless at the time of interview, only 40% had sought assistance of formal services. While data on people who access services are very important data sources for understanding people who access services, they cannot provide an estimate of the total number of homeless people at one point in time. Only the Census offers the opportunity to estimate for most people who were likely to have been homeless at one point in time.

However, there is an inherent imprecision in estimating homelessness using the Census of Population and Housing because the Census is not designed to classify people according to whether or not they were homeless on Census night. Variables collected in the Census that were designed for other purposes must be interpreted as proxies for likely homelessness. The ABS methodology includes in its homelessness estimates groups of people who, on balance, were most likely to have been homeless on Census night.

While it may be tempting to overestimate homelessness in some groups to compensate for both under-enumeration and likely under-estimation for some other groups, such an approach would result in estimates of characteristics that did not reflect those of the homeless population, including but not limited to their geographic spread. This may result in the misdirection of policy, funds and services. And while a balance between unavoidable under-estimation and deliberate over-estimation may result, this is unlikely. It is also very likely to be very different with each Census, destroying the capacity to monitor change over time. Recognising which groups of homeless people are underestimated in the Census, and using supplementary data sources to understand these groups, will both better address the needs of homeless people, and allow for assessments of change over time in the level of homelessness.

ABS recognises that some groups of people are more likely to be under enumerated in the Census. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be both under enumerated and over-represented in the homeless population. ABS has developed strategies for each Census aimed at maximising the enumeration of Indigenous persons.

So called rough sleepers and people staying in supported accommodation for the homeless are also at risk of being under enumerated in the Census. The ABS develops a homeless enumeration strategy for each Census, and works with homeless service providers to maximise the enumeration of these groups on Census night.

The ABS Post Enumeration Survey (PES) is used to estimate for the under enumeration of the Australian population in the Census. However it only covers people in private dwellings at the time of the PES, and therefore will not capture homeless people living in non-private dwellings but who were missed on Census night.

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## **WHICH GROUPS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE UNDERESTIMATED IN THE ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS?**

For some key groups, Census variables produce limited opportunity to estimate those likely to be homeless. The key population groups are homeless youth, homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and people fleeing domestic and/or family violence.

To find out more information about these groups, see the following fact sheets:

- Youth homelessness
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness
- Domestic and Family violence

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## **Factsheet: Youth Homelessness**

### **FACTSHEET: Youth homelessness**

Although youth are over-represented in the homeless population, homeless estimates for youth are likely to have been underestimated in the Census due to a usual address being reported for some homeless youth.

For some youth (sometimes referred to as 12-18 years or 12-24 years) who are homeless and 'couch surfing', a usual residence may still be reported in the Census. Their homelessness is masked because their characteristics look no different to other youth who are not homeless but are simply visiting on Census night. A usual address may be reported for 'couch surfers' either because the young person doesn't want to disclose to the people they are staying with that they are unable to go home, or the person who fills out the Census form on behalf of the young person staying with them assumes that the youth will return to their home. Homeless youth will be underestimated within the group: 'Persons staying temporarily with other households'.

ABS has not yet been able to establish any reliable way, with existing data sources, of estimating homelessness among youth staying with other households and for whom a usual address is reported in the Census. Service providers and researchers have indicated that the estimates of homeless youth derivable from Census data do not concord with their knowledge about youth homelessness.

Guided by its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, the ABS is continuing to undertake research and development to improve the estimation of homelessness, including youth homelessness. In particular, the ABS has undertaken a quality study to inform the potential development of a nationally representative homeless school students survey.

Until a robust methodology is developed to measure the level of youth homelessness, ABS will focus on producing transparent, consistent and repeatable estimates that can be used to

monitor change over time. Because the ABS methods are transparent, users can assess whether there is any evidence to suggest that the components of homelessness that cannot yet be estimated reliably are likely to be moving differently over time to those elements that can be measured.

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0) and **Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

## Factsheet: Overcrowding

### FACTSHEET: Overcrowding

People living in crowded dwellings represent a continuum within the scope of those who are marginally housed. In the context of the elements developed for the ABS definition of homelessness, people living in severe overcrowding are considered to be homeless because they do not have control of, or access to space for social relations. In extremely overcrowded dwellings inhabitants are generally unable to pursue social relations, or have personal (i.e. family or small group) living space, or maintain privacy, nor do different family / groups within the dwelling have exclusive access to kitchen facilities and a bathroom. In such circumstances, if people had accommodation alternatives it would be expected that they would have exercised them.

There are many situations of overcrowding which do not threaten the health and safety of the occupants. For example, the overcrowding may be slight, or for a short period of time. However, severe and sustained overcrowding can put the health and safety of the occupants at risk.

People living in severe overcrowding are considered to be in the sixth ABS homeless group. Severe crowding conditions are operationalised in the Census as living in a dwelling which requires 4 or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there, as defined by the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS).

The concept of crowding is based upon a comparison of the number of bedrooms in a dwelling with a series of household demographics such as the number of usual residents, their relationship to one another, their age and their sex.

Operationalisation using of overcrowding as homelessness at this severe level of 4 or more extra bedrooms is designed to prevent the misclassification of people as homeless who may choose to live together under some crowding to save money, to be close to family or for other reasons. In addition, it also takes account of the limitation of the Census household form which only seeks relationship information within the household in relation to 'person 1', as well as child relationships to 'person 2'. This limitation of Census family coding results in misclassification of family relationships, particularly for large households with complex family relationships or households which contain multiple families, or where persons are temporarily absent. Households that look like crowded group households in the Census may actually include a number of couples. Under CNOS a single adult requires their own bedroom but a couple can share a bedroom, and the masking of relationships can inflate the crowding measure.

Persons living in other crowded dwellings are usual residents living in dwellings reported in the Census requiring 3 extra bedrooms to accommodate them according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS). Under the operationalisation of the ABS definition they are not classified as homeless but are considered to be in marginal housing and may be at risk of homelessness. The ABS presents estimates of marginal housing from the Census, including persons living in other crowded dwelling alongside estimates of homelessness.

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0) and **Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

## Factsheet: Domestic and Family Violence

### FACTSHEET: Domestic and Family violence

Domestic and family violence is a significant cause of homelessness and personal safety is a concern for people who are subject to, or fleeing domestic and family violence.

Under the ABS homelessness definition, a person displaced from their home due to domestic violence becomes homeless if they have a temporary living situation and do not have access to accommodation alternatives that are secure, safe and adequate (and the home in which they were subject to domestic violence is not considered a safe alternative accommodation to their homeless situation).

A person experiencing the violence who remains in their unsafe home with the perpetrator, could be considered to lack control of and access to social relations. However, assessing these situations in a measurement context is very difficult, and the ABS definition currently excludes such situations from its definition of homelessness and characterises their living situation as being precarious or unstable and being at risk of homelessness. ABS will report the available information on these living situations and continue to develop its statistical measurement in this area.

The ABS recognise the difficulties in both enumerating people who are displaced from their home due to domestic and/or family violence in the Census of Population and Housing, and in classifying all of those that are enumerated correctly as either homeless or not homeless on Census night. Those enumerated in supported accommodation for the homeless will be measured. Some who are in boarding houses, staying temporarily with other households, in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough, or staying in other lodgings such as hotels or motels on Census night and who report no usual address will be classified as homeless. However some will not be able to be distinguished from other people who were visitors on Census night.

Some people who are displaced due to domestic and family violence may not be enumerated in the Census. Out of fear they may not have themselves recorded on a Census form for the dwelling they are staying in. For those who are reported on a Census form as being away from home on Census night, they may be reluctant, for a number of reasons including stigma, to report having no usual address on Census night. Alternatively, they may have an expectation that they may be able to return to their home in the future and do not see themselves as not having a usual address. As a result they can not be

distinguished from other people who were visiting on Census night and Census based estimates must be recognised as being an underestimate for this group.

The ABS have worked with its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group members to look to ways to both improve the enumeration of these homeless people in the Census as well as developing alternative sources of information such as the Personal Safety Survey. In late 2013 the ABS will have data from the Personal Safety Survey on people who left a violent current or previous partner and whether they 'couch surfed', sleep rough, stayed in a shelter etc. This will provide an indication of what accommodation was used by people the last time they separated from their violent partner/s and will be an important new source of information about homelessness and domestic violence.

As part of the development for Census 2016, the ABS will consider how they can improve the enumeration of, and the identification as homeless of those who were fleeing domestic and/or family violence in the Census. However the ABS recognises the need to use other data sources to gain a more complete picture of homelessness.

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0) and **Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

## **Factsheet: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness**

### **FACTSHEET: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness**

The ABS definition of homelessness has been developed for application to the general population in Australia. While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in the measures of homelessness developed with this definition, there are likely to be additional aspects to homelessness from an Indigenous perspective that the definition does not currently adequately capture.

In recognition of the differences in understanding of the concepts of home and homelessness in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context, the ABS is undertaking further research about how the ABS statistical definition of homelessness may be understood in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context. This work will also inform both Census enumeration and subsequent estimation of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The ABS will also work to develop a culturally appropriate module on previous experiences of homelessness suitable for inclusion in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey which can be compared to estimates from the total population from the 2014 General Social Survey.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have been under enumerated in the Census and estimates of homeless based on Census data will be an underestimation. In the 2011 Census, the underenumeration of Indigenous Australians was 17.2%. Some of those who were under-enumerated may have been homeless at the time of the Census.

Underestimation of homeless among those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were enumerated in the Census may occur as, for some Indigenous people, 'incorrect' information regarding 'usual residence' may have provided which masks their

homelessness.

It is debated in the literature whether the concept of 'no usual address' is appropriate for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Morphy (2007) discusses the problems in defining a 'usual resident' and 'visitor' in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context, as the distinction between 'my country / not my country' is more salient than the distinction between 'resident / visitor'. This issue becomes particularly problematic for people who are highly mobile. Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) also discuss the relevance of 'no usual address' to the Indigenous population, as the 'usual address' question is approached with a different cultural frame of reference. They note that it is not culturally appropriate to record 'no usual address' on Census night because 'home' is understood in a different way, particularly when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are staying with their extended family. Due to the different cultural frame of reference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is widely assumed that the western concept of 'no usual address' is under-reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This issue will impact on Census based estimates of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons enumerated in the Census who are classified as being in the categories for 'improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out', or temporarily visiting friends or relatives while homeless.

As part of the development for Census 2016, the ABS will consider how they can improve the identification of homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the Census but recognise the need to use other data sources to gain a more complete picture of homelessness.

For more information on the definition of homelessness or the methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census see **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0) and **Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

## About this Release

This publication presents official estimates of the prevalence of homelessness from the ABS' Census of Population and Housing for 2011.

The estimates have been produced using the ABS' methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census. More information on the methodology can be found in **Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

## A Spotlight on 'Severe' Crowding (Feature Article)

### FEATURE ARTICLE: A SPOTLIGHT ON 'SEVERE' CROWDING

#### INTRODUCTION

In 2011, 105,215 people - or 0.5% of the Australian population - were classified as being homeless on Census night (up from 89,728 in 2006) (Table 1).

**TABLE 1. HOMELESS OPERATIONAL GROUPS, 2001, 2006 and 2011**

	no.	2001 %	no.	2006 %	no.	2011 %
Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleepers out	8 946	9	7 247	8	6 811	6
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	13 420	14	17 329	19	21 259	20
Persons staying temporarily with other households	17 880	19	17 663	20	17 374	17
Persons staying in boarding houses	21 300	22	15 460	17	17 718	17
Persons in other temporary lodging	338	-	500	1	683	1
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	33 430	35	31 531	35	41 370	39
<b>Total homeless persons</b>	<b>95 314</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>89 728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>105 215</b>	<b>100</b>

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

\*\* On review the ABS has found 24 duplicate records out of over 105,000 records. This change is reflected in this feature article and will be in all future statistical releases.

People living in 'severely' crowded dwellings (i.e. usual residents of dwellings which needed four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate them adequately) have been the largest homeless group in each of the last three Censuses (39% of all homeless persons in 2011) (Table 1). While the total number of people living in 'severely' crowded dwellings fell slightly between 2001 and 2006, it jumped 31% (or 9,839 people) to 41,370 in 2011 and accounted for most of the rise in homelessness (Table 1).

This article uses the **ABS Census of Population and Housing** to examine the characteristics and circumstances of the two key population groups that comprised the majority of the homeless population living in 'severely' crowded dwellings in 2011, that is:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and persons living with them comprised 51% of persons living in 'severely crowded dwelling');
2. Persons born overseas (persons born overseas and persons living with them comprised 45% of persons living in 'severely crowded dwelling') (Table 2).

**TABLE 2. 'SEVERELY' CROWDED DWELLINGS, 2001, 2006 and 2011**

'Severely' crowded dwellings	2001	2006	2011
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Dwellings with one or more persons born overseas*	918	1 156	2 306
Dwellings	7 744	9 509	18 426
People	8	8	8
Average no. of people per dwelling			
Dwellings with one or more Indigenous persons	2 004	1 717	1 811
Dwellings	23 994	20 028	21 009
People	12	12	12
Average no. of people per dwelling			
Other 'severely' crowded dwellings	267	298	343
Dwellings	1 943	2 223	2 426
People	7	7	7
Average no. of people per dwelling			
Total - 'severely' crowded dwellings**	3 162	3 139	4 406
Dwellings	33 430	31 531	41 370
People	11	10	9
Average no. of people per dwelling			

\* Persons born overseas include all people born outside of Australia and its external territories (Australia, Australian External Territories, Norfolk Island and the Australian Antarctic Territory). People with a country of birth which was inadequately described were classified as born overseas, but not those who did not state their country of birth.

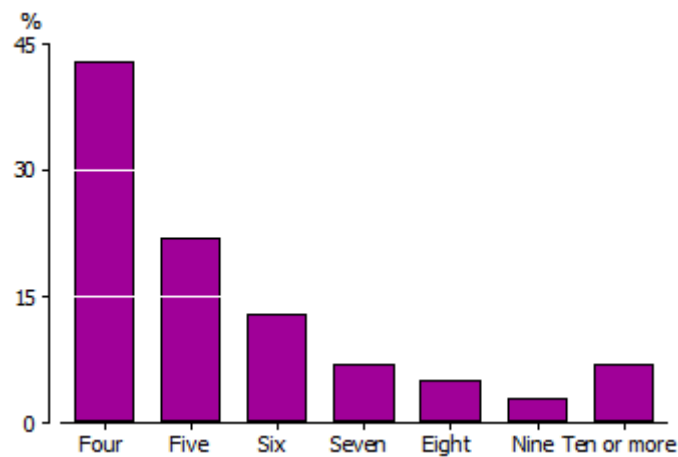
\*\* Components may not add to total as categories of dwellings with one or more Indigenous persons and dwellings with one or more persons born overseas are not mutually exclusive.

## 1) ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples made up 2.5% of the Australian population in 2011. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians accounted for 25% of all persons who were homeless on Census night in 2011 (26,744). Of those who were classified as homeless, 75% were living in 'severely' crowded dwellings.

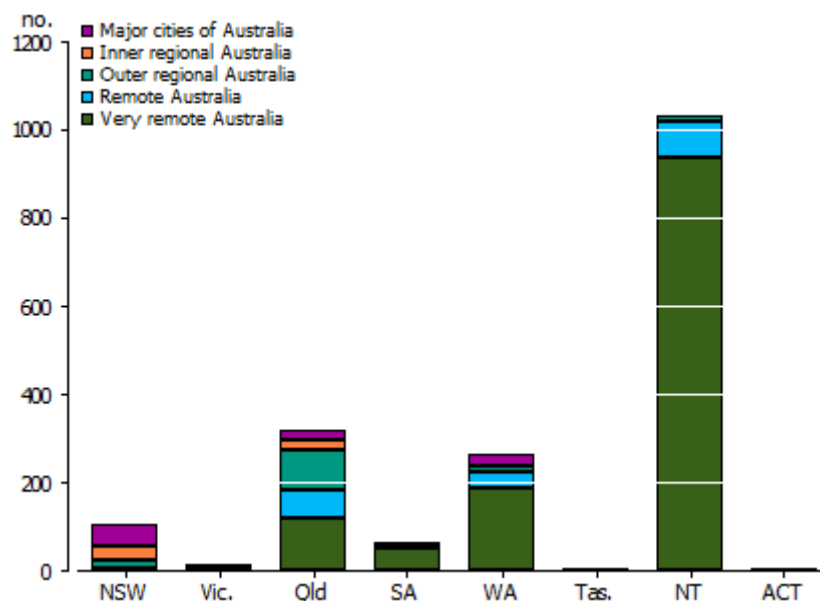
In 2011, there were 20,055 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in 1,811 'severely' crowded dwellings. On average, there were 12 people per dwelling, a rate that has been steady for the past three Censuses. More than a third of the 'severely' crowded dwellings (34% of dwellings) with one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples required six or more extra bedrooms according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3. EXTRA BEDROOMS REQUIRED IN 'SEVERELY' CROWDED DWELLINGS, Dwellings with one or more Indigenous persons, 2011**



The majority of 'severely' crowded dwellings with one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were located in very remote Australia (71%), based on the 2006 remoteness classification. Only 10% of such dwellings were in major cities. Fifty-seven per cent were located in the Northern Territory, with large proportions also found in Queensland (18%) and Western Australia (14%) (Figure 4).

**FIGURE 4. REMOTENESS OF 'SEVERELY' CROWDED DWELLINGS, Dwellings with one or more Indigenous persons, 2011**



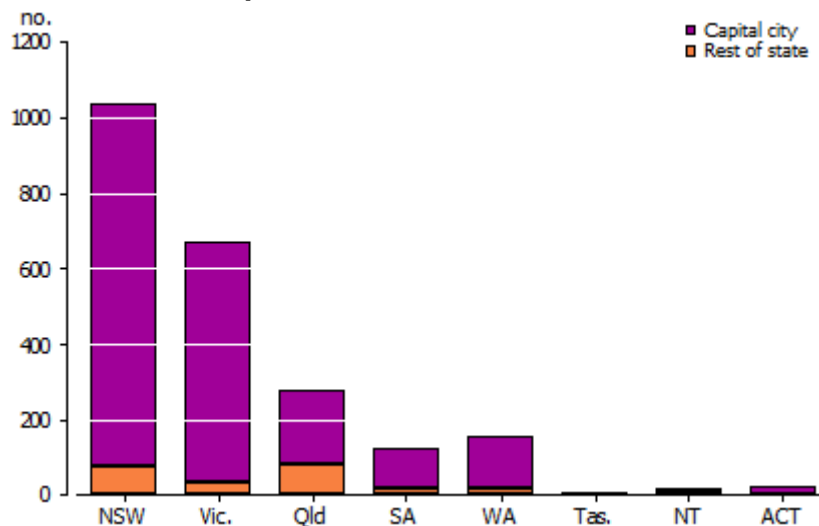
## 2) PERSONS BORN OVERSEAS

There has been an increase in the number of persons born overseas living in Australia in recent years. In the 2011 Census, there were 5.3 million persons who were born overseas, compared to 4.4 million in the 2006 Census. There has also been an increase in the rate of persons born overseas living in a 'severely' crowded dwellings. In 2011, 25 in every 10,000 persons born overseas lived in a 'severely' crowded dwelling, compared to 15 in every 10,000 persons in 2006.

The increase in the number and rate of homeless persons born overseas living in 'severely' crowded dwellings was the major contributor to the overall increase in homelessness between 2006 and 2011. However, increases were also seen in the number of persons in supported accommodation for the homeless and persons staying in boarding houses.

In 2011, consistent with the previous two Censuses, there were on average eight people per 'severely' crowded dwelling with one or more persons born overseas. Most 'severely' crowded dwellings with one or more persons born overseas were located in a capital city (89%), mainly Sydney (42%) or Melbourne (28%) (Figure 5).

**FIGURE 5. LOCATION OF 'SEVERELY' CROWDED DWELLINGS, Dwellings with one or more persons born overseas, 2011**



Forty-nine per cent of 'severely' crowded dwellings with one or more persons born overseas were one-family households; 32% were multi-family households; and 19% were group households. The majority of persons living in a 'severely' crowded dwelling with one or more persons born overseas were aged less than 35 years (76%), with 31% being aged 18 years or under.

Census data (2011) shows that compared to privately occupied dwellings with one or more persons born overseas which were not 'severely' crowded, dwellings with one or more persons born overseas which were 'severely' crowded were more likely to:

§ be rented (61% compared to 30%);

§ be multi-family households (32% compared to 3%); and

§ have lower weekly equivalised household incomes (31% compared to 21% below \$400; and 31% compared to 56% at or above \$600).

In addition, persons in these dwellings were more likely to:

§ have been born overseas (71% compared to 63%) and to have arrived in Australia within the last 5 years (34% compared to 12%);

§ have been born in India, Afghanistan, Vietnam or Iraq if born overseas;

§ be unemployed (8% compared to 4%) or not in the labour force (46% compared to 35%), if eligible to be in the labour force;

§ be students (45% compared to 26%); and

§ not speak English well or at all (19% compared to 7%).

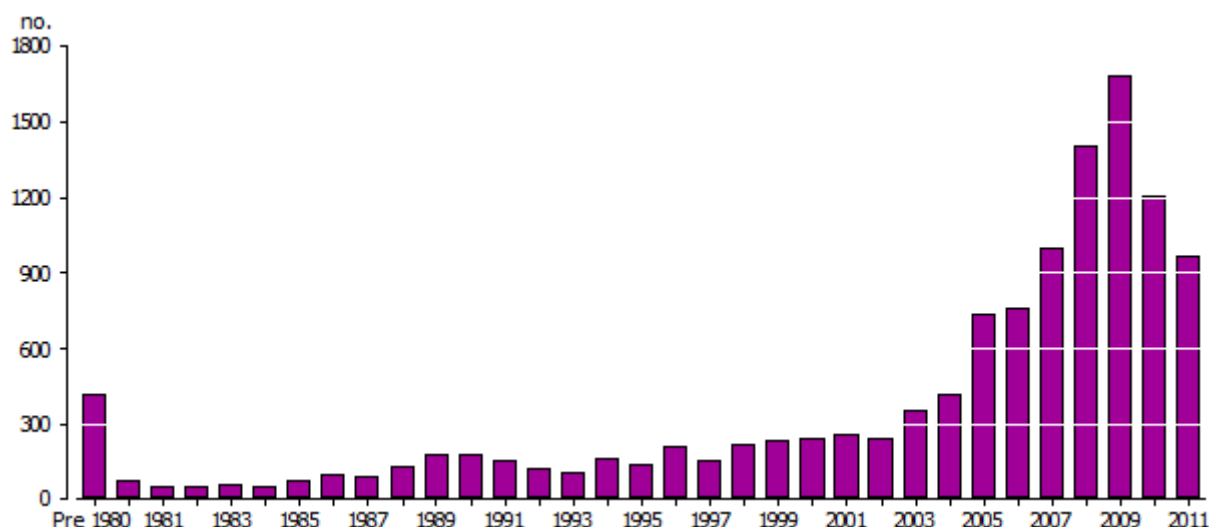
The following sections provide information on the country of birth and year of arrival for homeless people born overseas living in 'severely' crowded dwellings.

### **Year of arrival**

Of the 12,990 persons born overseas living in a 'severely' crowded dwelling in 2011, nearly half had arrived within the last five years (48%), and about two-thirds had arrived within the

last 10 years (67%) (Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6. YEAR OF ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA, Persons born overseas in 'severely' crowded dwellings, 2011**



Persons who arrived in Australia more recently were more likely to be living in a 'severely' crowded dwelling. In 2011, the rate of persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings was: \$ 62 in every 10,000 persons born overseas who arrived in the last five years; \$ 38 in every 10,000 persons born overseas who arrived between six and 10 years ago; and \$ 10 in every 10,000 persons born overseas who arrived more than 10 years ago.

Furthermore, the rates of persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings in 2011 were higher compared to 2006:

\$ 48 in every 10,000 persons born overseas who arrived in the last five years;  
\$ 19 in every 10,000 persons born overseas who arrived between six and 10 years ago; and  
\$ 7 in every 10,000 persons born overseas who arrived more than 10 years ago.

### Country of birth

In 2011, of the 12,990 persons born overseas living in 'severely' crowded dwellings: 11% were born in India; 10% in New Zealand; 9% in China; 8% in Afghanistan; 8% in Vietnam; 6% in Iraq; and 3% in Nepal. Between 2006 and 2011, the greatest increases were from persons born in these countries, which together accounted for 60% of the increase of persons born overseas living in 'severely' crowded dwellings (Table 7).

**TABLE 7. PERSONS BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN 'SEVERELY' CROWDED DWELLINGS, 2006 and 2011**

Country of birth	2006			2011		
	no.	%	Rate per 10 000 of each pop. group	no.	%	Rate per 10 000 of each pop. group
PERSONS WHO ARRIVED IN AUS. IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS*						
India	799	26	148	1 208	19	90

New Zealand	160	5	24	441	7	43
China***	148	5	24	691	11	64
Afghanistan	181	6	313	509	8	606
Vietnam	97	3	87	311	5	141
Iraq	213	7	239	299	5	230
Nepal	12	0	61	363	6	200
<b>All persons born overseas</b>	<b>3 098</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>6 254</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>62</b>

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PERSONS WHO ARRIVED IN AUS. MORE THAN FIVE YEARS AGO\*\*

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India	149	5	16	259	4	16
New Zealand	314	9	10	808	12	21
China***	85	3	6	451	7	21
Afghanistan	138	4	126	527	8	261
Vietnam	612	18	41	710	11	44
Iraq	184	6	78	436	6	124
Nepal	12	0	46	50	1	77
<b>All persons born overseas</b>	<b>3 309</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6 736</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>

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ALL PERSONS BORN OVERSEAS

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India	948	15	64	1 467	11	50
New Zealand	474	7	12	1 249	10	26
China***	233	4	11	1 142	9	36
Afghanistan	319	5	190	1 036	8	362
Vietnam	709	11	44	1 021	8	55
Iraq	397	6	122	735	6	153
Nepal	24	0	53	413	3	168
<b>All persons born overseas</b>	<b>6 407</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12 990</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>

\* Includes persons who arrived in Australia in the Census year or the four years prior to the Census.

\*\* Includes persons born overseas who did not state their year of arrival to Australia.

\*\*\* Excludes Special Administrative Regions of China and Taiwan

The rates of persons born overseas living in 'severely' crowded dwellings were highest for persons born in Afghanistan, Nepal and Iraq. Persons born in those countries were also much more likely to still be living in 'severely' crowded dwellings after being in Australia for more than five years.

## SUMMARY

§ In 2011, 105,215 people - or 0.5% of the Australian population - were classified as being homeless on Census night (up from 89,728 in 2006).

§ People in 'severely' crowded dwellings have been the largest homeless group in the last three Censuses.

§ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people born overseas are over-represented in 'severely' crowded dwellings.

§ The number of people living in 'severely' crowded dwellings jumped 31% (or 9,839 people) between 2006 and 2011, driven by an almost doubling in the number of 'severely' crowded dwellings with one or more persons born overseas.

§ In 2011, the largest increase for people born overseas living in 'severely' crowded dwellings was from people born in China, New Zealand, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Iraq and Vietnam. Together these countries accounted for 60% of the increase seen between 2006 and 2011.

# History of Changes

**This document was added or updated on 28/11/2012.**

**01/08/2016** References to *Information Paper: Guide to Homelessness Statistics (cat. no. 4923.0)* were removed as this product was not published.

**20/12/2013** Additional datacube. This datacube presents small area estimates for Statistical Area Level 2.

**26/03/2013** Additional feature. This feature article presents further analysis and data on 'severe' crowding.

**21/12/2012** Additional datacubes. These datacubes present detailed State and Territory estimates.

**30/11/2012** Additional datacubes. These datacubes present small area estimates for Statistical Area Level 3 and 4.

**28/11/2012** Additional datacube. This datacube presents Remoteness estimates.

## Explanatory Notes

### Explanatory Notes

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

##### INTRODUCTION

**1** This publication presents estimates of prevalence of homelessness on Census night, derived from the Census of Population and Housing using the ABS definition of homelessness. Prevalence is an estimate of how many people experienced homelessness at a particular point-in-time. The ABS use six homeless operational groups to present the estimates of homelessness.

**2** Estimates are also presented for selected groups of people who may be marginally housed and whose living arrangements are close to the statistical boundary of homelessness and who may be at risk of homelessness.

**3** Other ABS collections publish information on homelessness. The 2010 General Social Survey (GSS) included a module on previous experiences of homelessness. The GSS data gives a picture of the incidence of homeless, as well as trends in homelessness over time, at least for those who have transitioned out of homelessness at the time of interview. The

GSS homelessness module has been improved and has been included in the 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers which is now in the field. The ABS has also collected information in the 2012 Personal Safety Survey about people living in fear of a violent partner and where they go when they leave a violent partner. The GSS module is being further enhanced for incorporation in the 2014 GSS.

**4** In March 2012, the ABS released the article **Life after homelessness in Australian Social Trends** (cat. no. 4102.0). This article drew on the results from the 2010 GSS. The article examines a range of socio-economic indicators of those who had experienced at least one episode of homelessness in the 10 years prior to the survey, but were no longer homeless.

**5** (No longer applicable)

## **SCOPE OF THE CENSUS BASED HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATES**

**6** The Census aims to enumerate all persons in Australia on Census night (with the exception of foreign diplomats and their families).

**7** To maximise the quality of the enumeration of the Australian population, the ABS has a special strategy to enumerate some homeless populations that are hard to enumerate through the standard Census procedures.

**8** The Census is the only collection that goes to all persons in Australia, and is therefore the best source to get a prevalence estimate of the number of homeless Australian people at any one point-in-time. However, 'homelessness' itself is not a characteristic that is directly measured in the Census. Instead, estimates of the homeless population may be derived from the Census using analytical techniques, based on both the characteristics observed in the Census and assumptions about the way people may respond to Census questions.

**9** An accurate measure of the prevalence of homelessness allows society to judge some aspects of the scale of the problem. If prevalence measures are estimated on a consistent, comparable basis and at regular intervals, then trends and the direction of change can be determined. It allows society to hold itself and governments accountable for some outcomes at this broad level, and can be used to identify, over time, if interventions or policies have been successful.

**10** As importantly, to target prevention, or amelioration of the circumstances of homelessness, it is necessary to know the locations of the homeless, and their characteristics. Such knowledge also allows monitoring of the outcomes of programs to identify what interventions are successful. Ideally, fine geographic level prevalence measures allow consideration of where homeless people are located for place-based targeting of services and other interventions. The characteristics of the homeless population, such as sex, age, whether of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, or the identification of sub populations are also valuable delineations of a point-in-time measure for interventions tailored to client needs.

**11** The prevalence estimates of homelessness cover usual residents in Australia on Census night and do not include:

- overseas visitors,
- people who were enumerated in offshore, shipping or migratory regions,
- people on an overnight journey by train or bus, and
- people enumerated in 'Other territories'.

## CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

**12** This publication uses the ABS definition of homelessness, operationalised for using data from the Census of Population and Housing. A summary of the definition can be found in Appendix 1: Definition of Homelessness in this publication. For more information also see:

- **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0),
- Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology in this publication, and
- **Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

## HOMELESS OPERATIONAL GROUPS

**13** ABS has developed six homeless operational groups for presenting estimates of people enumerated in the Census who were likely to have been homeless on Census night. These groups are:

- Persons in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out,
- Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless,
- Persons staying temporarily with other households,
- Persons in boarding houses,
- Persons in other temporary lodgings, and
- Persons living in severely crowded dwellings.

**14** Detailed listings of the rules used to classify Census data for these groups are included in Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology in this publication. More details on how these groups relate to the definition of homelessness can be found in **Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

## OTHER MARGINAL HOUSING GROUPS

**15** The ABS also compile estimates from Census data for specific key groups of people who may be marginally housed, but who are not classified as homeless. Those groups are:

- Persons living in other crowded dwellings,
- Persons in other improvised dwellings, and
- Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks.

**16** The marginal housing groups are limited to the groups that can be obtained from the Census. Other marginal housing, such as housing with major structural problems or where residents are in constant threat of violence, cannot be obtained from the Census and are therefore not included.

## UNDER / OVER-ESTIMATION AND UNDER-ENUMERATION

**17** Observing homeless people in any data collection is a challenge, and the homeless



circumstance may mean that these people are not captured at all in datasets used to enumerate people generally. Not all homeless people will be enumerated in data sets of those homeless people accessing particular services for the homeless. The 2010 ABS General Social Survey found that, of those who had had an experience of homelessness in the last ten years and who were no longer homeless at the time of interview, only 40% had sought assistance of formal services (see Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

**18** While data on people who access services are very important in understanding people who access services, they cannot provide an estimate of the total number of homeless people at one point-in-time. Only the Census offers the opportunity to estimate the number of people who were likely to have been homeless at any one point-in-time.

**19** However, there is an inherent imprecision in estimating homelessness using data from the Census of Population and Housing. The Census is not designed to classify people according to whether or not they were homeless on Census night. Variables collected in the Census that were designed for other purposes must be interpreted as proxies for likely homelessness. The ABS methodology includes in its homelessness estimates groups of people who were enumerated in the Census and, on balance, were most likely to have been homeless on Census night.

**20** It may be tempting to overestimate homelessness in some groups to compensate for both underenumeration and likely underestimation for some other groups. However, such an approach would result in estimates of characteristics that did not reflect those of the homeless population, including but not limited to their geographic spread. This may result in the misdirection of policy, funds and services. And while a balance between unavoidable underestimation and deliberate overestimation may result, this is unlikely, particularly when there is little information on the magnitude of underestimation. It is also very likely that the scale of any imbalance in error will be very different with each Census, destroying the capacity to monitor change over time. Recognising which groups of homeless people are underestimated in the Census, and using supplementary data sources to understand these groups, will both better address the needs of homeless people, and allow for assessments of change over time in the level of homelessness.

**21** ABS recognises that some groups of people are more likely to be underenumerated in the Census. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' are more likely to be both underenumerated and overrepresented in the homeless population. ABS has developed strategies for each Census aimed at maximising the enumeration of Indigenous persons (see Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a).

**22** So called rough sleepers and people staying in supported accommodation for the homeless are also at risk of being underenumerated in the Census. The ABS develops a homeless enumeration strategy for each Census, and works with homeless service providers to maximise the enumeration of these groups on Census night (see Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011b).

**23** The ABS Post Enumeration Survey (PES) is used to estimate for the underenumeration of the Australian population in the Census. However it only covers people in private dwellings at the time of the PES, and therefore will not capture homeless people staying in non-private dwellings at the time of the PES but who were missed on Census night. Also the PES does not capture sufficient information to determine whether a person is homeless. Furthermore, the PES is a sample survey and the likelihood of including a homeless person in a private dwelling is low. For all of these reasons the PES cannot be used to estimate underenumeration or under-coverage of homelessness estimates derived from the Census.

## KEY POPULATION GROUPS

**24** For some key groups, Census variables provide limited opportunity to estimate those likely to be homeless. Three key groups are:

- homeless youth,
- homeless people displaced due to domestic and family violence, and
- homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

### Youth

**25** The ABS homeless estimates derived from the Census are likely to underestimate the extent of youth homelessness but there are no data available to determine even approximately the magnitude of the underestimation.

**26** For some youth (sometimes referred to as 12-18 years or 12-24 years) who are homeless and 'couch surfing', a usual residence may still be reported in the Census. Their homelessness is masked because their characteristics look no different to other youth who are not homeless but are simply visiting on Census night. A usual address may be reported for 'couch surfers' either because the young person doesn't want to disclose to the people they are staying with that they are unable to go home, or the person who fills out the Census form on behalf of the young person staying with them assumes that the youth will return to their home. Homeless youth will be underestimated within the group: 'Persons staying temporarily with other households'.

**27** ABS has not been able to establish any reliable way, with existing data sources, of estimating homelessness among youth staying with other households and for whom a usual address is reported in the Census. Service providers and researchers have indicated that the estimates of homeless youth derived from Census data do not concord with their knowledge about youth homelessness but there is no information to know the extent of any divergence. However, some of the views expressed about the prevalence of youth homelessness appear to reflect on the incidence of homelessness i.e. the number of youth who experience homelessness over a year will be many times the number who are homeless at any one point-in-time. For some purposes, particularly early intervention, an incidence measure may be more appropriate to inform on the scale of the issue.

**28** Guided by its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG), the ABS is continuing to undertake research and development to improve the estimation of homelessness, including youth homelessness. In particular, the ABS has been undertaking a quality study to inform the potential development of a nationally representative homeless school students survey.

**29** Until a robust methodology is developed to measure the level of youth homelessness, the ABS will focus on producing transparent, consistent and repeatable estimates that can be used to monitor change over time. Because the ABS methods are transparent, users can assess whether there is any evidence to suggest that the components of homelessness that cannot yet be estimated reliably are likely to be moving differently over time to those elements that can be measured.

**30** For analysis on youth homelessness from the 2006 Census see ABS publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

## **Persons displaced due to domestic and family violence**

**31** The ABS recognises the difficulties in both enumerating people who are displaced from their home due to domestic and/or family violence, and in classifying correctly as either homeless or not homeless all of those who are enumerated on Census night. Those enumerated in supported accommodation for the homeless will be measured. Some who are in boarding houses, staying temporarily with other households, in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough, or staying in other lodgings such as hotels or motels on Census night and who report no usual address will be classified as homeless. However some will not be able to be distinguished from other people who were visitors on Census night.

**32** Some people who are displaced due to domestic and family violence may not be enumerated in the Census. Out of fear they may not have themselves recorded on any Census form for the dwelling they are staying in. For those who are reported on a Census form as being away from home on Census night, they may be reluctant, for a number of reasons, including stigma, to report having no usual address on Census night. Alternatively, they may have an expectation that they may be able to return to their home in the future and do not see themselves as not having a usual address. As a result they cannot be distinguished from other people who were visiting on Census night and Census based estimates must be recognised as being an underestimate for this group.

**33** The ABS have worked with its HSRG members to look to ways to both improve the enumeration of these homeless people in future Censuses as well as developing alternative sources of information such as the Personal Safety Survey.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians**

**34** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have been underenumerated in the Census, and estimates of homelessness based on Census data will therefore be an underestimation. In the 2011 Census, the net undercount rate for Indigenous Australians was 17.2%. Some of those who were underenumerated may have been homeless at the time of the Census.

**35** Underestimation of homelessness among those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were enumerated in the Census may occur as, for some Indigenous people, information regarding 'usual residence' may have been provided which masks their homelessness.

**36** It is debated in the literature whether the concept of 'no usual address' is appropriate for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Morphy (2007) discusses the problems in defining a 'usual resident' and 'visitor' in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context, as the distinction between 'my country / not my country' is more salient than the distinction between 'resident / visitor'. This issue becomes particularly problematic for people who are highly mobile. Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) also discuss the relevance of 'no usual address' to the Indigenous population, as the 'usual address' question is approached with a different cultural frame of reference. They note that it is not culturally appropriate to record 'no usual address' on Census night because 'home' is understood in a different way, particularly when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are staying with their extended family. Due to the different cultural frame of reference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is widely assumed that the Western concept of 'no usual address' is under-reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 2008). This issue will impact on Census based estimates of homelessness

among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons enumerated in the Census who are classified as being in the categories of 'improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out', or temporarily visiting friends or relatives while homeless.

**37** In recognition of the differences in understanding of the concepts of home and homelessness in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context, the ABS is undertaking further research about how the ABS statistical definition of homelessness may be understood in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian context. The ABS will establish a sub group of the HSRG to provide recommendations to the HSRG for the development of a definition relevant to homelessness in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context. Any recommendations from this group will be considered by the ABS in both Census enumeration and subsequent estimation of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The ABS will also work to develop a culturally appropriate module on previous experiences of homelessness suitable for inclusion in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey which can be compared to estimates from the total non-Indigenous population from the 2014 General Social Survey.

**38** Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness from the Census should be considered to be an underestimate.

**39** For analysis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness from the 2006 Census see the ABS publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

## **INTERPRETATION OF THE USUAL RESIDENCE QUESTIONS IN THE CENSUS**

**40** The 'usual residence' or usual address variable in the Census is designed, for Census purposes, to report on: population characteristics by small area; and to report mobility i.e. of current usual address versus address one and five years ago.

**41** Interpretation of Census data on 'usual address' as an approximation to homelessness without reference to other information reported in the Census is incorrect due to the way the question is worded and the intent of the question.

**42** The ABS Census asks people to report a usual address. The instructions for reporting are to write in:

**"the address at which the person has lived or intends to live for a total of six months or more in the relevant Census year. For persons who have no usual address write NONE..."**

**43** The advice, if enquired, to people completing the Census form and who move around is that a usual address is somewhere you have lived or intend to live for six months or more, otherwise writing 'none' in the usual address question is the appropriate answer.

**44** There are a very wide range of reasons why a person may not have stayed, or be intending to stay, at a particular address for six months or more in a particular Census year. In the 2007-08 Survey of Income and Housing about 16% of household reference persons reported having lived at their current private dwelling address for less than one year, implying that on average, at least 250,000 people change address each month (See Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

**45** People will have moved from a former usual address for many reasons, for example moving for study or work, or upon retirement. Some of these movers may be temporarily accommodated in their new city or town, and at the time of the Census, cannot report a future address of the home that they have not yet rented or bought.

**46** People who moved in July or August, just before the Census, might report their former home as the place they had lived for at least six months, but may consider it odd to report this old address as their 'usual' address. It is considered unlikely that people report a former usual address as their current usual address after they have permanently left that address, or left it on a long-term basis. The design of the Census 'usual address' question for reporting on mobility, and for supporting population measures, would be undermined if people did report their old usual addresses to which they would not be returning, or not returning for quite some time. By reporting 'no usual address' these people are counted in the population where they are enumerated, and counted as movers from their former usual address.

**47** People moving to step up in either the jobs market or the residential property market, or people capitalising on their lifelong residential investment when they retire, may temporarily not own any property while between investments, but are unlikely to experience the forms of social exclusion that affect people who fit a more traditional view of homelessness. For example, as reported in ABC radio interviews, families moving from Queensland to Karratha to rent a slab on which to park their caravan reported that 'the money was just too good to refuse'. Such families would certainly benefit from cheaper housing options in their new area in the long term, either to rent or to add to their holdings of owned premises, but the issues for social inclusion are less likely to reflect the entrenched disadvantage (or risk of such disadvantage) that characterises the homeless population as defined by the ABS definition of homelessness, see **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0).

**48** The ABS uses reporting of 'no usual address' as a starting point to classify anyone who may be homeless, and then refines this broad inclusion by analysing these people to classify, on balance, groups of people who are unlikely to be homeless. The areas of exploration of those reporting 'no usual address' but, on balance, as a group are unlikely to be homeless, include those identified as overseas students in group houses, 'grey nomads' travelling in their caravans after retirement, and a wide range of other people in visitor only households, especially those renting in holiday destinations, and sharing holiday accommodation with other families that do report a usual residence, and recently arrived migrants or residents returning to Australia who, similar to internal migration situations, have not yet had the opportunity to select their permanent home. Some of these people in these groups are clearly not staying with usual residents in a household, while others are staying in a substantial dwelling that they may own in a holiday destination but which may be a second or third home and is not their 'usual residence' in a Census year.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF NON-PRIVATE DWELLINGS AND PRIVATE DWELLINGS**

**49** Both non-private dwellings (NPDs) and private dwellings may house people on Census night who may be homeless. NPDs include places such as hotels, motels, staff quarters, boarding houses, prisons, hospitals etc. Given the different context and Census field procedures, different interpretations of Census variables are required for private dwellings and NPDs to determine whether the occupants in the dwelling are, on balance, most likely to be homeless on Census night.

**50** Non-private dwellings are initially identified by a Census Area Supervisor and confirmed as such by the owners and managers of those properties. Census collectors may also find a

non-private dwelling missed by the Supervisor, and in these cases the usual owner verification is followed. All other dwellings identified as structures which are intended to have people live in them, and which are habitable on Census night, are classified as private dwellings. However, it is possible that some private dwellings may be operated on Census night as illegal boarding houses.

**51** The boarding house classification of NPDs by their owners appears to work reasonably well in the field. However, the classification is not designed to only capture boarding houses for the homeless - it also captures dwellings such as regional accommodation serving children from multiple schools, which need to be removed for the purposes of estimating homelessness.

**52** If a private dwelling is being operated illegally on the basis of multiple room-by-room tenancies, the Area Supervisor and collector may enumerate it according to its legal and apparent basis of operation as a private dwelling and not as a boarding house. The methodology applies rules for large (apparently) unrelated group households in order to try to identify, and include as homeless accommodation, any private dwellings that may be operating as boarding houses. However, this method is limited in its precision and may overestimate as boarding houses the number of large (apparently) group households due to the limitations of the Census in capturing all relationships in the household.

**53** The Census only captures the relationships in relation to the first person listed on the household form, and child relationships to person 2. Therefore, people in the household who are a couple, but neither person has a relationship to person 1, will not be reflected as a couple. Households with five or more usual residents may therefore be firstly incorrectly classified as group households, and secondly then incorrectly be assumed to be a boarding house for the homeless. When a usual resident on Census night is temporarily absent, failure to take this into account can also lead to wrong assumptions about the nature of both the household and the dwelling.

**54** By just relying on the NPD classification returned from the field for estimating these populations, it is possible that some supported accommodation dwellings and some illegal boarding houses will be misclassified as private dwellings. The methodology shows how these dwellings are treated, in particular to help ensure that people in 'group houses' are treated correctly.

**55** To ensure that people staying in supported accommodation for the homeless are correctly classified, the ABS obtains lists of homeless supported accommodation to correctly flag these dwellings as homeless accommodation. ABS also supplies green stickers to homeless services, who encourage their clients to place the sticker on their Census form and then post their form back to the ABS. The ABS then flags these dwellings as being supported accommodation for the homeless.

**56** Some people living in specific living situations in NPDs on Census night are not included in the definition of homelessness. While these living situations lack one or more of the key elements of 'home' identified in the definition of homelessness, the people occupying these places are not regarded as homeless. People in these living situations are not classified as homeless as:

- they may have chosen to live in these circumstances and have accommodation alternatives, or
- are required by law to be living in these circumstances, or
- are in acceptable temporary living arrangements (such as student halls of residence), or
- it is essential for their broader health and well-being to be living in these conditions.

**57** The specific exclusions include:

- people confined in prisons, detention centres and other institutions such as juvenile correctional facilities or hospitals,
- students living in halls of residence, and
- members of religious orders such as monks and nuns living in seminaries and nunneries and similar establishments.

## **Boarding houses**

**58** The definition of homelessness includes residents of boarding houses as homeless if they:

- do not have control of or access to space and or no privacy, OR
- have no tenure or initial tenure is short and not extendable.

**59** If it is assumed that people living in boarding houses do not have either of these elements and do not have accommodation alternatives, so they are considered homeless.

**60** However, some residents of boarding houses have secure tenure and have access to space and privacy. These people would not be considered to be homeless, even if they do not have accommodation alternatives. The Census has some information which allows the ABS to establish whether a dwelling is most likely to be a boarding house. However it does not offer enough information about occupants security of tenure, or their access to space for social relations. Therefore, determining which occupants are homeless is difficult. In the absence of this information, on balance the ABS has included all people in these dwellings who are either usual residents (excluding staff) or visitors reporting no usual address, as homeless. This is likely to result in an overestimate of people who are homeless when assessed against the ABS definition. The ABS does, however, report those in boarding houses as a separate category to aid policy and service provision. This is because in some State and Territories boarding houses are used to move people out of other forms of homelessness, such as rough sleeping or couch surfing, towards more independent, secure, long-term accommodation.

**61** Although the ABS makes a significant effort to identify boarding houses, both registered and unregistered, the ABS acknowledge that there will potentially be an underestimation of people living in boarding houses in estimates of homelessness, and an overestimation of those living in boarding houses who are likely to be homeless according to the ABS definition. For more information see Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology.

## **Supported Accommodation for the Homeless**

**62** As outlined above, the ABS obtains lists of homeless supported accommodation and uses a 'green sticker strategy'.

**63** However, the nature of the provision of accommodation to homeless people in need of housing support services is changing. In the lead up to the next Census, procedures will be reviewed to ensure that people in new forms of supported accommodation are correctly classified. Advice from service providers about clients who are accommodated using

vouchers or 'brokerage' in hotels, caravan parks will be used etc to classify them as people in supported accommodation for the homeless.

## **Transitional Housing Management Units**

**64** Long-term supported accommodation, often described as Transitional Housing Management (THM) Units, often provides some security of tenure, the dwellings are adequate (including basic kitchen facilities and a bathroom), and the household has privacy and exclusive use of those basic facilities. The THMs that meet these levels of housing, under the ABS definition of homelessness, would not be classified as homeless. However, persons living in those THMs that lack one or more of these elements would be classified as homeless.

**65** ABS obtained lists of addresses of supported accommodation from government bodies, individual Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) providers and umbrella homelessness services organisations. In 2011 ABS also sought information about what type of supported accommodation was provided i.e whether it was crisis or transitional housing etc. Some of the lists ABS received included this extra detail, some did not. As this information is required to make an assessment about the adequacy of the dwelling, THMs have again been included in the homeless operational group 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' in 2011, because the information to classify them more completely in line with the ABS definition is not yet available. The ABS is analysing information received for 2011 to consider ways in which it can be used to better identify and classify occupants of THMs as homeless or otherwise in future Censuses.

## **IMPUTED RECORDS**

**66** Census collectors are required to visit 'private' dwellings five times (at different times and on different days) to try to make contact with any people who might be staying in the dwelling on Census night.

**67** Where contact cannot be made, collectors are encouraged to speak to neighbours, or a 'credible source' about whether the dwelling was occupied on Census night.

**68** If the collector is not 'absolutely certain' that the 'private' dwelling was not occupied on Census night, system imputation follows.

**69** No imputation that affects homelessness estimation was undertaken for NPDs (e.g. boarding houses, or supported accommodation as determined by Area Supervisors to be NPDs and their classification described by the owner/manager).

**70** No imputation is undertaken for 'rough sleepers', but it is undertaken for improvised dwellings.

**71** For the 2011 Census, 690,000 persons were imputed to be in occupied non-contact private dwellings.

**72** For about a third of the imputed people (about 252,000), people were imputed where the collector obtained information that there were some people in the dwelling on Census night - the number and sex of the people is obtained. For these records, the collector record book information on dwelling type, structure and location is used, together with the third party reported numbers of people by sex, to find a 'donor' dwelling nearby to replicate the age, sex, usual residence (or 'place of enumeration') and registered marital status of that donor



dwelling onto the imputed household in the non-contact dwelling. No other variables are imputed.

**73** The remaining two-thirds (438,000 people) where no information could be obtained as to whether or not the dwelling was occupied on Census night, were fully imputed based on looking for a donor record based on dwelling type, structure and location.

**74** Imputed records are retained in the estimates of homelessness for the group 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless'. While some of these properties were enumerated as NPDs in the 2011 Census, most were enumerated as private dwellings and reassigned a "SAAP" flag based on the lists of properties provided by jurisdictions. In the flagged properties where no contact was made, 1,126 people were imputed using a credible source to confirm the occupation of the dwelling on Census night. Another 1,396 people were imputed without a credible source. While only a third of the national rates of imputation were undertaken with a credible source, for "SAAP" the rate was closer to 50%.

**75** For listed "SAAP" properties it is known that the property is not a second home, nor a holiday home or a vacant property up for either sale, demolition or renting etc. And for nearly half of the imputations a credible source is used and no more information is needed to confirm the homeless state of the people in the dwelling on Census night. For the 1,396 or so imputed from a 'donor' record, this estimate may understate or overstate the numbers of homeless people actually in those "SAAP" properties on Census night. However, the scale of any such error is not likely to be large nor biased (an estimation error under 7% of total "SAAP" accommodation on Census night).

**76** Imputed records for people staying in non-contact private dwellings that are not "SAAP" flagged populations are excluded from the homeless estimates because there is no certainty about the nature of the dwelling occupancy on Census night (it might be a second home, a holiday home or a vacant property up for either sale, demolition or renting etc.) and no information is available about the characteristics of the occupants to assess their likely homelessness.

## **ESTIMATES OF PERSONS IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HOMELESS IN 2001**

**77** While the 'list' and 'green sticker' strategies for SAAP properties were undertaken in the 2001 Census, the information was not retained. Therefore, for 2001 homelessness estimates of persons in supported accommodation for the homeless, the ABS has used data from the AIHW SAAP collection on the number of clients and accompanying children accommodated on Census night for every state and Territory except Victoria. The Department of Human Services (Victoria) provided the ABS with a comprehensive list of their SAAP and THM properties. This was used along with the national SAAP data collection (to establish the number of women in domestic violence services) to provide an overall estimate of number of people in SAAP accommodation for Victoria in 2001.

**78** In 2001, the total number of people in the homeless operational group 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' was 13,420.

**79** However, the homelessness SAAP estimates for 2001 are only for totals and by state and territory, and no Census demographic characteristics are available. Nor is it possible to remove overlaps between the AIHW based estimate and the other homeless operational groups which can be directly estimated using Census data, which will result in some minor overestimation.

## **CANADIAN NATIONAL OCCUPANCY STANDARD**

**80** For both the homeless operational group 'Persons living in severely crowded dwellings', and for the Marginal Housing group of other crowded dwellings just outside the definition of homelessness, the level of crowding is estimated according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS).

**81** The concept of crowding is based upon a comparison of the number of bedrooms in a dwelling with a series of household demographics such as the number of usual residents, their relationship to one another, their age and their sex.

**82** There is no single standard or measure for housing utilisation, however the CNOS is widely used internationally and the ABS uses it for its measures of crowding. It is a suitable standard for use with Census data because all of the required variables for its calculation are available from the Census, although family coding limits its suitability in large complex family households, and where persons may be temporarily absent on Census night.

**83** The CNOS is sensitive to both household size and composition. The measure assesses the bedroom requirements of a household by specifying that:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom,
- children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom,
- children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom,
- single household members 18 and over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples, and
- a lone person household may reasonably occupy a bed sitter.

**84** Households living in dwellings where this standard cannot be met are considered to be overcrowded.

### **Limitations in calculating the CNOS**

**85** There may be some underestimation associated with the application of the CNOS to Census data. It is not possible to create a CNOS estimate of the number of extra bedrooms needed for households where any key piece of information is missing. This includes the number of persons per dwelling, age of the persons, the relationship in household, and in some cases, where at least one person (who is not the spouse of person 1) is temporarily absent on Census night. CNOS is not able to be determined for imputed records because, for such records, key information such as the number of bedrooms is missing. In addition, there may be cases where usual residents are not recorded on the Census form due to fear by the residents that they may be found to have more residents living in the dwelling than are allowed by their lease agreement.

### **VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS**

**86** For the purposes of homelessness estimation and estimating marginal housing visitor only households are those dwellings where all persons in the dwelling reported no usual address and there were no usual residents.

## **Grey nomads**

**87** The ABS methodology for estimating homelessness from the Census classifies as homeless those people most likely to be homeless on Census night. People most likely to possess characteristics that present them as 'grey nomads' are not homeless. This exclusion is on the basis that the group is more likely to be travelling for recreation or lifestyle purposes rather than being homeless.

**88** 'Grey nomads' are defined as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, none were in the labour force, they were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats on Census night, and reported having no usual address. The majority of these 'grey nomads' were enumerated in holiday destinations. This group does not include people who were staying with other households, such as with friends and relatives, nor those who were unemployed or were employed. Some older travellers who were travelling with their children or other younger people were not classified in this 'grey nomad' group because not everyone in the dwelling / household was over 55 years of age.

**89** Analysis of 2011 Census data shows that the 'grey nomad' group have almost identical characteristics as in 2006 and 2001. The number of 'grey nomads' increased slightly between 2006 and 2011 by about 500 people, all in the 65 years and over age group.

**90** The 2011 analysis continues to support the classification of the 'grey nomad' group as not being homeless and that the established methodology, when applied to the 2011 Census, continues to exclude a group of people most likely to be travelling for recreation or lifestyle purposes rather than being homeless.

## **RELATIONSHIP STATUS OF VISITORS**

**91** Relationship information collected on the Census form is only retained for those persons who were usual residents in a dwelling on Census night. It is not possible to present information on the relationships of visiting youth, or persons who reported no usual address, to either the usual residents of the dwelling or to other visitors to the dwelling on Census night. The ABS undertook an investigation on a small random sample of Census records to provide some insight into the likely relationships of visiting youth, and persons reported as having no usual address, to the usual residents of the dwelling and to other visitors.

**92** Analysis suggests that over a quarter of youth (persons aged 12-18 years) who reported a usual address elsewhere were visiting a parent (either alone or with other youth). A further 15% were visiting a relative (e.g.. grandparent).

**93** Persons who reported no usual address and were visiting a dwelling with at least one usual resident were most commonly visiting a parent, child or partner (30%).

**94** For visitor only households, where all the persons reported having no usual address, over two thirds were couples with or without children and a further 10% were mothers with children. It was also found that most of the people in visitor only households were likely to be either on holiday (30%), or own or rent the dwelling they were in (40%).

## **MONETARY CUTOFFS**

**95** The following paragraphs include additional details on the monetary cut offs used in the homeless methodology for 2011, 2006 and 2001.

## **Income**

**96** People aged 15 years and over are asked to report their usual gross income in the Census by selecting an income range (they are not asked to report in actual dollars) before deductions for tax, superannuation contributions, health insurance, amounts salary sacrificed, or any other automatic deductions. Income is generally considered to be understated in Census reporting.

**97** As it is not possible to directly aggregate personal incomes reported in ranges, a specific dollar amount is imputed for each personal income range selected by each household member, and these are summed for each household and the result allocated to a household income range.

**98** Individual and derived household income levels are used as cut offs in homeless estimation methodology (as outlined in the rules for each of the homeless operational groups), along with other characteristics of the person or household, in determining whether households were more likely to have, on balance, accommodation alternatives.

**99** For the 'Boarding house' homeless operational group, an individual income cut off of \$600 per week was used in 2011 and 2006 (\$400 per week in 2001). If 60% or more of the residents of a dwelling had incomes above this level the dwellings was not likely to be boarding house.

**100** For the 'Persons in other temporary lodging' homeless operational group, an individual income cut off of \$400 per week was used in 2011 and 2006 (\$300 per week in 2001). Any individuals in these dwellings with incomes below this level and also with certain other characteristics was classified as homeless.

**101** A household income cut off of \$2,000 or more per week in the 2011 and 2006 Census in conjunction with certain tenure types and employment status to ascertain the likelihood of the occupants of a dwelling classified as improvised being construction workers etc rather than as being homeless. For 2001 the household income cut off was \$1,594 per week.

## **Rental payments**

**102** As with high income, paying relatively high rent is an indication that someone has accommodation alternatives. Mean weekly housing costs, as measured in the 2009-10 ABS Survey of Income and Housing for households renting in the private rental market, was \$336 per week. No State, and no capital city recorded an average weekly rent in the private rental market that was above \$400 per week. Median weekly rentals in the private rental market were lower than the means, in total and for all States and Territories, except the ACT for which the mean and median were equal (Survey of Income and Housing 2009-10).

**103** The cut off for rental payments was set at \$400 per week in 2011 (\$300 per week in 2006 and \$265 per week in 2001).

## **Mortgage payments**

**104** As for income and rent, mortgage payment cut offs were set to a level considered to indicative of accommodation alternatives and above a level of payment that could be afforded by people who were, on balance, most likely to be homeless.

**105** The cut off was \$1,400 per month in 2011 (\$1,050 per month in 2006 and \$845 per month in 2001).

## RATES PER 10,000 OF THE POPULATION

**106** Population rates presented in this publication are presented as a rate per 10,000 of the total population. That is the number of homeless persons per 10,000 persons of the usual resident population in the Census excluding people in external territories, at sea, or in migratory and off shore regions. The table below shows the usual resident population numbers for the 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses that have been used as the base in the rate tables.

### STATES AND TERRITORIES, Total Usual Resident Population - selected characteristics - 2001, 2006 and 2011(a)(b)

Number of persons	NSW no.	Vic. no.	Qld no.	SA no.	WA no.	Tas. no.	NT no.	ACT no.	Aust. no.
<b>2011</b>									
Age group (years)									
Under 12	1 068 266	800 424	700 807	227 549	351 567	74 126	39 992	53 601	3 316 332
12-18	620 269	473 675	410 560	141 697	207 202	46 265	21 137	31 054	1 951 859
19-24	537 076	445 142	352 162	126 522	188 477	35 728	19 652	36 436	1 741 195
25-34	941 494	760 871	587 345	202 318	323 946	55 257	36 523	58 248	2 966 002
35-44	971 614	774 616	620 691	216 375	328 154	64 827	33 141	52 929	3 062 347
45-54	950 439	726 464	590 807	224 945	310 154	71 536	28 559	48 008	2 950 912
55-64	810 261	611 236	501 015	199 610	254 393	66 807	20 742	38 784	2 502 848
65-74	541 662	402 221	322 590	133 201	152 537	44 751	8 557	21 663	1 627 182
75 and over	476 464	359 352	246 292	124 347	122 325	35 941	3 530	16 495	1 384 746
Sex									
Male	3 408 818	2 632 581	2 147 942	787 212	1 125 799	242 590	109 426	176 745	10 631 113
Female	3 508 726	2 721 421	2 184 326	809 351	1 112 956	252 648	102 408	180 474	10 872 310
Indigenous status									
Indigenous	172 618	37 991	155 819	30 432	69 662	19 618	56 776	5 183	548 099
Non-Indigenous	6 402 010	5 069 120	3 952 319	1 503 197	2 038 444	456 250	137 678	338 029	19 897 047
Not stated	342 916	246 890	224 130	62 935	130 650	19 369	17 380	14 007	1 058 277
Need for assistance with core activities									
Has need for assistance with core activities	338 359	255 496	192 006	87 117	79 072	28 726	5 773	11 962	998 511
Does not have need for assistance with core activities	6 183 365	4 821 363	3 880 016	1 436 309	2 008 411	444 115	182 021	328 911	19 284 511

Not stated	395 822	277 145	260 245	73 136	151 273	22 396	24 038	16 346	1 220 401
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 917 545</b>	<b>5 354 001</b>	<b>4 332 269</b>	<b>1 596 564</b>	<b>2 238 755</b>	<b>495 238</b>	<b>211 833</b>	<b>357 218</b>	<b>21 503 423</b>

## 2006

Age group (years)									
Under 12	1 029 428	751 454	636 437	220 681	312 135	73 765	38 370	48 953	3 111 223
12-18	624 435	467 269	388 368	140 970	196 728	46 965	20 873	31 290	1 916 898
19-24	516 756	405 554	320 915	120 036	163 537	35 055	17 691	32 857	1 612 401
25-34	891 023	677 871	523 581	185 745	261 330	54 019	32 036	50 302	2 675 907
35-44	957 834	741 335	575 551	219 060	296 535	66 863	31 138	48 916	2 937 232
45-54	904 332	679 508	539 166	216 889	279 638	70 009	26 467	46 005	2 762 014
55-64	719 545	534 474	437 533	177 822	213 291	58 570	16 951	34 155	2 192 341
65-74	465 327	345 525	259 421	115 097	126 941	37 453	6 314	17 243	1 373 321
75 and over	440 450	329 379	223 466	118 027	108 611	33 691	2 966	14 314	1 270 904
Sex									
Male	3 228 413	2 420 369	1 935 296	745 203	975 809	233 303	99 293	159 654	9 797 340
Female	3 320 717	2 512 000	1 969 141	769 125	982 939	243 087	93 511	164 381	10 054 901
Indigenous status									
Indigenous	138 502	30 143	127 568	25 555	58 704	16 766	53 659	3 875	454 772
Non-Indigenous	6 019 359	4 636 204	3 551 963	1 419 453	1 772 746	436 726	122 654	305 136	18 264 241
Not stated	391 268	266 024	224 908	69 318	127 297	22 896	16 492	15 025	1 133 228
Need for assistance with core activities									
Has need for assistance with core activities	278 246	208 228	154 706	73 401	68 406	23 657	4 622	10 317	821 583
Does not have need for assistance with core activities	5 838 233	4 430 402	3 491 296	1 363 328	1 747 503	427 337	165 767	297 714	17 761 580
Not stated	432 651	293 740	258 435	77 598	142 837	25 395	22 416	16 006	1 269 078
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 549 130</b>	<b>4 932 369</b>	<b>3 904 438</b>	<b>1 514 327</b>	<b>1 958 746</b>	<b>476 390</b>	<b>192 806</b>	<b>324 035</b>	<b>19 852 241</b>

## 2001

Age group (years)									
Under 12	1 050 256	754 068	606 032	227 968	310 254	77 184	39 594	51 304	3 116 660
12-18	615 689	449 938	359 827	141 181	192 270	47 419	20 252	32 347	1 858 923
19-24	494 330	375 973	287 515	110 938	150 819	33 249	17 924	30 777	1 501 525
25-34	916 457	691 797	506 764	199 256	266 169	58 212	34 732	49 013	2 722 400

35-44	966 501	713 227	531 774	223 099	284 472	68 834	31 052	48 541	2 867 500
45-54	853 570	631 475	483 709	207 118	256 830	65 072	24 392	45 474	2 567 640
55-64	597 563	434 841	332 966	144 706	164 223	46 690	12 251	26 074	1 759 314
65-74	448 024	327 442	225 898	112 309	112 248	34 284	4 816	14 871	1 279 892
75 and over	383 789	282 149	187 155	103 423	90 331	29 478	2 374	11 597	1 090 296
Sex									
Male	3 123 342	2 287 873	1 745 127	724 114	911 083	225 724	97 325	152 453	9 267 041
Female	3 202 837	2 373 037	1 776 513	745 884	916 533	234 698	90 062	157 545	9 497 109
Indigenous status									
Indigenous	120 040	25 059	112 569	23 375	58 464	15 855	50 795	3 548	409 705
Non-Indigenous	5 916 178	4 443 980	3 277 812	1 401 623	1 699 101	428 386	125 307	295 912	17 588 299
Not stated	289 961	191 871	131 259	45 000	70 051	16 181	11 285	10 538	766 146
Need for assistance with core activities(c)									
Has need for assistance with core activities	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Does not have need for assistance with core activities	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Not stated	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 326 179</b>	<b>4 660 910</b>	<b>3 521 640</b>	<b>1 469 998</b>	<b>1 827 616</b>	<b>460 422</b>	<b>187 387</b>	<b>309 998</b>	<b>18 764 150</b>

na not available

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result cells may not add to the totals.

(b) Excludes usual residents of External Territories, at sea, migratory and off-shore regions.

(c) Not available for 2001 as the data item 'Need for assistance with core activities' was not collected prior to the 2006 Census.

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2001, 2006, 2011

**107** Table 5.6 shows the rate of homelessness per 10,000 of the population for all states and territories in 2011. The rate for the Northern Territory was 730.7 homeless persons per 10,000; higher than for the other states and territories. For all homeless operational groups, except persons in supported accommodation for the homeless, the rates of homelessness per head of population in the Northern Territory are higher than other states and territories. The rates for the operational groups 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out' and 'Persons living in severely crowded dwellings' show that a higher proportion of the Northern Territory population are in these situations than for other states and territories: 40.0 compared with between 0.8 and 4.1 homeless persons per 10,000 for the improvised dwelling group and 621.8 compared with between 3.7 and 18.6 for those living in severely crowded dwellings.

**108** The overall difference in the rate of homelessness for the Northern Territory is therefore driven by the rate for the operational group 'Persons living in severely crowded dwellings'. Nearly 50% of people in this operational group identify as Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander Australians. Compared to other states and territories in Australia, in 2011, the Northern Territory had a higher per capita population of Australians who were identified as Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander. Persons living in severely crowded dwellings also had a higher proportion of persons who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Australians.

## **USE OF CENSUS DATA FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS**

### **Presentation of relationship information**

**109** In the published estimates of homelessness the ABS has not presented data on relationships between people who are homeless, such as household composition or family composition, except for persons in the homeless operational group 'Persons living in severely crowded dwellings'. Relationship information is not available for all persons who are homeless. Some people in the homeless operational group 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out' are enumerated on Special Short Forms which do not collect information to the individual respondent's relationship to anyone else. Persons enumerated in NPDs on the Personal Form are not asked to provide information to establish their relationship to anyone else in the dwelling.

**110** While information is collected about relationships between visitors and between visitors and other residents of private dwellings this information is not retained in Census processing. Therefore is not available for the operational group 'Persons staying temporarily with other households'. It is, however, possible to present relationship information for the usual residents of the dwelling the person is visiting.

**111** For these reasons it is possible only to consider relationship information for those in the homeless operational group 'Persons living in severely crowded dwellings'.

### **Items not available for 2011 homelessness estimates release**

**112** The data item 'Remoteness Area' was not available at the time of publishing, and therefore has not been included for use in the analysis of 2011 homelessness estimates in this publication.

### **Items not collected in 2001**

**113** The data items 'Core Activity Need for Assistance' and 'Volunteering' were first collected in 2006 and are therefore not available in 2001.

### **Level of highest educational attainment**

**114** The classification 'Level of Highest Educational Attainment' shows records the highest educational achievement a person has attained. In this publication, the category 'Below year 10' includes Certificate I and II and Certificate not further defined and those who report no educational attainment.

### **Humanitarian migrants**

**115** The ABS identified a group of new migrants - these are people who arrived in Australia the Census year and were born overseas who report having no usual address and were enumerated in a private dwelling which was not an 'improvised dwelling, tent or sleeper out'. The vast majority of these new migrants were not considered to be homeless. However, the ABS identified a group of new migrants which are likely to be humanitarian migrants, who in



the methodology are classified as homeless.

**116** Humanitarian migrants are new migrants who report a country of birth which suggests they could be a recipient of a humanitarian visa. The ABS uses the top 10 countries for humanitarian settlers as published in the table '**Humanitarian Settler Arrivals by Birth Place**' in the '**Immigration update**' by the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC 2012). The countries used in the methodology are for the financial year ending in the Census year.

**117** In 2011 the countries were:

- Iraq
- Afghanistan
- Burma
- Bhutan
- Iran
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Nepal
- Thailand
- Sri Lanka
- Ethiopia

## **CENSUS METHODOLOGY**

**118** The Census of Population and Housing is the largest statistical collection undertaken by the ABS, and one of the most important. Its objective is to accurately measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census night, and the dwellings in which they live. This provides a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each of the state, territory and local government areas, primarily for electoral purposes and for the distribution of government funds. The Census also provides the characteristics of the Australian population and its housing within small geographic areas and for small population groups. This information supports the planning, administration, policy development and evaluation activities of governments and other users.

**119** The Census is conducted by a Census collector drop-off approach, where Census collectors will deliver, to each dwelling in a clearly bounded local area, materials that allow respondents to complete their form on-line or on paper. The Census collector returns to pick up the forms after Census night unless a completed Census form, either on-line or paper, has been returned to the ABS Data Processing Centre (DPC). In addition, Special collectors are recruited where necessary to undertake Census duties in large NPDs (such as hospitals and hotels) and to enumerate people not in dwellings, such as rough sleepers.

## **History of the collection of data on homelessness in the Census of Population and Housing**

**120** The 1996 Census was the first Census to target Australia's homeless population using a special enumeration strategy. This strategy aimed to not only maximise the coverage of the Australian population but also to provide information from the Census to policy makers and service deliverers on the number and characteristics of homeless people. The ABS has continued to have a special enumeration strategy for the homeless population for subsequent Censuses.

**121** In the 2011 Census the ABS employed special enumeration strategies for homeless people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In the lead-up to the Census, the ABS liaised with state/territory organisations in order to gain their assistance in correctly identifying accommodation likely to cater for the homeless. Prior to Census night, ABS staff from regional offices contacted groups providing services for the homeless to identify possible sites where homeless people were likely to be located. Where possible, members of the homeless community were to be engaged to enumerate 'difficult' areas where significant numbers of homeless people were likely to spend Census night. For more information see Appendix 3: 2011 Census Procedures in this publication.

**122** However the ABS has a long history of collecting information relevant to identifying homeless people in the Census. In the 1933 and 1947 Censuses, a question was asked for the 'number of persons (if any) who slept out throughout the year on verandahs (not enclosed sleep-outs)'. In 1986, a dwelling structure category 'Improvised dwelling' was provided on the form for the collector to mark. This category was changed to 'Improvised home, campers out' in 1991, but there was no distinction between homeless people and those who were camping (such as on holiday).

**123** Questions about the usual residence where a person usually lives provides an indication on homelessness. However, from 1976 until 1991, those who had no usual address were instructed to tick their usual address as 'this address'. They were classified as having their place of enumeration on Census as their usual address. Since then, the form has an instruction to write 'none' if a person does not have a usual address for six months or more in the Census year.

**124** From 1976 to 1991, collectors were instructed to seek out all people camping or sleeping out by visiting 'any places in your Collection District (CD) on Census night where it is likely that persons may be sleeping out, e.g. camping areas, park benches, derelict buildings etc'. They were instructed if they found such a person to issue a Household Form and help them fill it out on the spot. They were assigned to a non-private dwelling type 'campers out'. However, some collectors may not have followed this instruction if they did not believe there were people in their area, or for fear of their own safety. Prior to 1996, some Divisional Managers undertook additional measures to enumerate the homeless, such as providing refreshments.

## **Homeless Enumeration Strategy**

**125** The Homeless Enumeration Strategy employed since 1996 was developed with the aim of ensuring that everyone was enumerated on Census night. The strategy targets those homeless groups that are hard to enumerate through the mainstream Census collection. For more information see Appendix 3: 2011 Census Procedures in this publication.

## **Response errors and non-response bias**

**126** Two potential sources of error in the Census are response errors and non-response bias. These may occur in any enumeration whether it is a full enumeration (Census) or a sample.

**127** Response errors include errors on the part of respondents. These reporting errors may arise through inappropriate wording of questions, misunderstanding of what data are required, inability or unwillingness to provide accurate information, and mistakes in answers to questions. Some of the response error will reflect people with imprecise knowledge about other residents in their dwelling nevertheless reporting on behalf of others.

**128** Non-response bias arises because the persons for whom no response is available may have different characteristics in relation to homelessness and marginal housing than persons who responded in the Census.

**129** Response errors and non-response bias are difficult to quantify in any collection. However, every effort is made to minimise these errors in the Census by careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of Census collectors and efficient operating procedures. Non-response bias is minimised by call-backs to those households which do not respond (see Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011c).

## **WHAT CAN THE CENSUS POST ENUMERATION SURVEY TELL US ABOUT HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATES?**

**130** The quality of the Census data is further enhanced by using information collected in a post-enumeration survey (PES) to obtain estimates of the net undercount in the Census. The PES is conducted immediately following the Census. While the PES collects information representative of the vast majority of Australians, it is not designed to estimate the undercount of persons who may be homeless (as it does not enumerate those who live in special dwellings such as boarding houses, or those who are not living in private dwellings at the time of the PES). It does, however, provide information about the characteristics of people who may have been missed in the Census. It will include some people who were homeless on Census night but were not homeless during the PES, or those who were staying in a private dwelling on Census night such as those people staying with other households.

**131** Since the PES does not approach non-private dwellings (nor people sleeping out) it does not generate specific undercount rates for people in those circumstances at the time of the PES. However, the final undercount estimates are weighted to account for the entire population, including those people in non-private dwellings and those who were not in dwellings.

## **REFERENCES**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**141** ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated: without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the **Census and Statistics Act 1905**.

## **RELATED PUBLICATIONS**

- **Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness**, Catalogue No. 4922.0.
- **Information Paper: Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing**, Catalogue No. 2049.0.55.001
- **Homelessness Statistics - Q&A and Factsheets**, online attached to Catalogue No. 2049.0.55.001.
- **Life After Homelessness**, Australian Social Trends, March 2012, Catalogue No. 4102.0.
- **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology**, Catalogue No. 2050.0.55.002.
- **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006**, Catalogue No. 2050.0.55.001.
- **How Australia Takes a Census, 2011**, Catalogue No. 2903.0.
- **Census Dictionary, 2011**, Catalogue No. 2901.0.
- **Census of Population and Housing - Details of Undercount, 2011**, Catalogue No. 2940.0.

# **Glossary**

## **GLOSSARY**

### **Age**

Refers to a person's age at last birthday. These data are collected for each person. Age is

calculated from date of birth, however if this is not provided, stated age is used. If neither is provided age is imputed.

## **Australia**

Australia is defined in the **Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC)**. It includes the states and territories and the other territories of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Jervis Bay Territory, but excludes Norfolk Island and the other Australian external territories of Australian Antarctic Territory, Heard and McDonald Islands, Ashmore and Cartier Islands and Coral Sea Territory. Prior to 1996, Census tabulations excluded Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands from the Australian total but the counts were available separately.

## **Australian born**

Australian born includes all people born in Australia and excludes people:

- born at sea,
- whose response was classified 'Inadequately described, or
- whose response was classified 'Not elsewhere classified'.

## **Australian Citizenship**

Refers to people who state they have Australian Citizenship.

## **Australian Census Analytic Program (ACAP)**

The Australian Census Analytical Program (ACAP) provides researchers with access to unpublished Census data. The objectives of this program were to publish important and previously unrevealed information incorporating 2006 Census and other data by:

- assisting and encouraging issue-driven research, and
- increasing the use of Census data.

ACAP provides Australian researchers with an opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of Australia by advancing contemporary understanding of Australia's social, cultural and economic environment.

## **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)**

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification (**ASGC**) is being progressively replaced by the **Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)**. Statistics from the 2011 Census are being released using the ASGS. Correspondence files will be available from the ABS website to aggregate the **Statistical Local Area (SLA)** to other areas of the ASGC. For more information, see **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)** (cat. no. 1216.0).

## **Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)**

The Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) is the new geographical standard developed by the ABS for the collection and dissemination of geographic statistics. It is a hierarchically structured classification with a number of spatial units to satisfy different statistical purposes. The ASGS areas used for the Census are:

- Mesh Block (MB)
- Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1)
- Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2)
- Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3)
- Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4)
- State/Territory (STE)
- Australia (AUS)
- Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA)
- Urban Centre/Locality (UC/L)
- Section of State Range (SOSR)
- Section of State (SOS)
- Indigenous Location (ILOC)
- Indigenous Area (IARE)
- Indigenous Region (IREG)
- Significant Urban Areas (SUA), and
- Remoteness Area (RA).

For more information see **ABS geography page** <<https://www.abs.gov.au/geography>>.

### **Average**

**See** Mean.

### **Birthplace**

**See** Country of birth.

### **Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS)**

The Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) for housing appropriateness is sensitive to both household size and composition. **CNOS** assesses the bedroom requirements of a household by specifying that:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom,
- children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom,
- children 5 years of age or older of opposite sex should have separate bedrooms,
- children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom, and
- single household members 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples.

Households living in dwellings where this standard cannot be met are considered to be overcrowded.

### **Caravans, cabins, houseboats, etc.**

Enumeration of people in caravans, houseboats, cabins etc. varies depending on their situation. Occupied caravans are usually treated as private dwellings with the exception of some caravans on residential allotments (see below).

**Caravans on Residential Allotments:** An occupied caravan on a residential allotment is usually treated as an occupied private dwelling. The exception to this is where there are one or more other structures on the allotment and the

occupants of the caravan live and eat with the occupants of the main dwelling. In this case the occupants are all classed as one household and the caravan is counted as an additional room of the main dwelling.

**Caravans on Roadsides/Open Land:** Prior to the 2006 Census, occupied caravans at roadside parking areas or on open land were classified as sleepers-out. The occupants of the caravans complete household forms.

For the 2011 and 2006 Censuses, caravans on roadsides/open land are treated the same as caravans in caravan parks. That is, they are treated as occupied private dwellings and families are identified and coded.

**Caravans or Cabins in Caravan Parks:** Since the 1986 Census, occupied caravans or cabins in caravan parks have been treated as occupied private dwellings, i.e. families are identified and coded. Prior to this, they were treated as non-private dwellings.

**Houseboats:** Occupied houseboats are treated as occupied private dwellings regardless of location. Prior to the 1986 Census, occupied craft in marinas were treated as non-private dwellings.

Managers' residences in caravan parks or marinas are enumerated and classified as separate private dwellings. Unoccupied caravans and boats/craft, regardless of location, are not counted in the Census.

## Census

The Australian Census of Population and Housing is an official count of population and dwellings, and collects details of age, sex, and other characteristics of that population. For more information see **How Australia Takes a Census, 2011** (cat. no. 2903.0) and the information paper **Census of Population and Housing, Nature and Content, 2011** (cat. no. 2008.0). These papers are also available on the ABS web site <<https://www.abs.gov.au>>.

## Census counts

The Census counts people where they were located on Census night and this count of the population is referred to as the place of enumeration count. A count of the population based on their place of usual residence is also available. While every effort is made to achieve a complete Census count, some underenumeration inevitably occurs for various reasons, for example, the inadvertent omission of very young children, treatment of some dwellings as unoccupied when in fact they are occupied, and failure to find all dwellings. Refusal by householders to complete the Census form is not a significant cause of underenumeration.

## Child

This is a person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, foster or nominal son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household. A child is also any individual under 15, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child relationship with another member of the household. This includes otherwise related children less than 15 years of age and unrelated children less than 15 years of age. In order to be classified as a child, the person can have no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household. A separate family in the household is formed in this instance. If a person is aged under 15 and has a partner and/or a spouse these relationships are not recorded.

## Child under 15

This is a person who has been classified as a child of another household member and who

is aged under 15 years. A person who is classified as a child under 15 is considered to be a dependent child.

### **Collection District (CD)**

Until 2006 this was the smallest geographical area for which Census data were available. For 2011, they will be replaced with **Statistical Areas Level 1** (SA1s).

### **Core Activity Need for Assistance**

Measure introduced in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing to determine the number of people with a profound or severe disability. For the Census, people with a profound or severe disability are defined as those people needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a disability, long-term health condition (lasting six months or more) or old age.

### **Counting unit**

The basic counting unit for homelessness estimation is the person. This counting unit provides for the richness of their personal characteristics (including relationships with others) for analysis as well as analysis by their living situation.

### **Country of birth**

The Census records a person's country of birth. For the 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses, the **Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC)** is used to classify responses for country of birth of person. This classification uses the current names of countries, so if a person uses a former name, the current name is coded. For example, Siam would be coded to Thailand.

### **Couple family**

A couple family is identified by the existence of a couple relationship. A couple relationship is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage. A couple family can be with or without children, and may or may not include other related individuals.

### **Data quality**

Each stage of the Census is subject to stringent quality assurance procedures which result in data of high quality. However, in a Census there are recognised sources of error and some of these may survive in the data produced. Potential sources of error in the Census are: underenumeration, respondent error, processing error and introduced random error. Introduced random error is used to protect the confidentiality of individuals. The effect of such errors on overall Census results is generally insignificant and does not impair the usefulness of Census data.

### **Domestic violence**

Violence by any member of the person's household (e.g. partners, parents, siblings, children, housemates, and other household members).

### **Dwelling**



In general terms, a dwelling is a structure which is intended to have people live in it, and which is habitable on Census night. Some examples of dwellings are houses, motels, flats, caravans, prisons, tents, humpies and houseboats. Private dwellings are enumerated using household forms, which obtain family and relationship data.

Non-private dwellings (hotels, hospitals etc.) are enumerated on individual personal forms.

All occupied dwellings are counted in the Census. Unoccupied private dwellings are also counted with the exception of unoccupied dwellings in caravan parks, marinas and manufactured home estates. Unoccupied residences of owners, managers or caretakers of such establishments are counted. And for the 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses, unoccupied units in retirement villages (self-contained) are also counted.

## Dwelling Location

Dwelling Location applies to private dwellings, and describes the location of dwellings other than 'typical' private dwellings. The majority of private dwellings will appear in the 'Other' category.

## Dwelling Structure

Dwelling Structure classifies the structure of private dwellings enumerated in the Census. The information is determined by the Census collector.

The broad categories are

**Separate house:** This is a house which stands alone in its own grounds separated from other dwellings by at least half a metre. A separate house may have a flat attached to it, such as a granny flat or converted garage (the flat is categorised under Flat, unit or apartment - see below). The number of storeys of separate houses is not recorded.

Also included in this category are occupied accommodation units in manufactured home estates which are identified as separate houses.

**Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse, etc.** These dwellings have their own private grounds and no other dwelling above or below them.

**Flat, unit or apartment:** This category includes all dwellings in blocks of flats, units or apartments. These dwellings do not have their own private grounds and usually share a common entrance foyer or stairwell. This category also includes flats attached to houses such as granny flats, and houses converted into two or more flats.

**Caravan, cabin, houseboat:** This category includes all occupied caravans, cabins and houseboats regardless of location. It also includes occupied campervans, mobile houses and small boats. Separate houses in caravan/residential parks or marinas occupied by managers are not included in this category.

**Improvised home, tent, sleepers-out:** This category includes sheds, tents, humpies and other improvised dwellings, occupied on Census night. It also includes people sleeping on park benches or in other 'rough' accommodation.

**House or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.:** A house or flat attached to a shop, office, factory or any other non-residential structure is included in this category.

## Dwelling Type

Dwelling Type classifies all dwellings into the basic dwelling types. The categories are:

**Occupied Private Dwelling:** An occupied private dwelling is a private dwelling occupied by one or more people.

A private dwelling is normally a house, flat, or even a room. It can also be a caravan, houseboat, tent, or a house attached to an office, or rooms above a shop.

Occupied dwellings in caravan/residential parks are treated as occupied private dwellings.

Occupied dwellings in manufactured home estates and units in retirement villages (self-contained) were classified as occupied private dwellings since the 1996 Census.

**Unoccupied Private Dwellings:** These are structures built specifically for living purposes which are habitable, but unoccupied on Census night. Vacant houses, holiday homes, huts and cabins (other than seasonal workers' quarters) are counted as unoccupied dwellings. Also included are newly completed dwellings not yet occupied, dwellings which are vacant because they are due for demolition or repair, and dwellings to let.

Unoccupied private dwellings in caravan/residential parks, marinas and manufactured home estates are not counted in the Census. The exception to the above are residences of owners, managers or caretakers of the establishment and for the 2006 Census, unoccupied residences in retirement villages (self-contained).

**Non-Private Dwellings (NPDs):** NPDs are those dwellings, not included above, that provide a communal or transitory type of accommodation.

NPDs include hotels, motels, guest houses, prisons, religious and charitable institutions, boarding schools, defence establishments, hospitals and other communal dwellings.

People in NPDs are enumerated on personal forms and so information on their family structure is not available. In the case of accommodation for the retired or aged, where the one establishment contains both self-contained units and units that are not self-contained, then both household forms (self-contained) and personal forms (not self-contained) are used as appropriate.

**Migratory:** People enumerated on an overnight journey by plane, train or bus cannot be allocated a dwelling type. This category exists for processing purposes only.

**Off-Shore:** This includes dwellings such as off-shore oil rigs, drilling platforms and the like. Prior to the 2006 Census, it also included people enumerated aboard ships in Australian waters.

**Shipping:** This dwelling type is for people enumerated aboard ships in Australian waters. For the 2001 and earlier Censuses, they were included in the 'Offshore' category.

## Education

See Level of Highest Educational Attainment.

### Educational qualification

Every Census since 1911 has included a question in which respondents reported their highest level of educational achievement. In the 1966 Census, respondents were asked to provide details of the qualification title and the institution at which it was obtained. In all Censuses since 1966, people aged 15 years and over have been asked whether they had

obtained a qualification and, if so, the qualification name and field of study. The 1971 Census also asked whether the person was currently studying for a qualification and, if so, its name. Prior to 2001, this information was restricted to post-school educational qualifications. From 2001, the information includes all qualifications (both school and post-school) and the level and field of the highest qualification.

Qualifications data are used to assess the skill level of the labour force, and potential labour force, and are valuable for the planning and implementation of labour force training programs.

## **Employed**

**See** Labour Force Status.

## **Enumeration**

**See** Place of enumeration, Place of Usual Residence.

## **Estimated Resident Population (ERP)**

The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) is the official measure of the Australian population, and is based on the concept of usual residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality or citizenship, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. The ERP includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 months and excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months.

## **European typology of homelessness (ETHOS)**

The European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS) currently defines homelessness as being without a 'home'. Having a 'home' can be understood as: having an adequate dwelling (or space) over which a person and his/her family can exercise exclusive possession (physical domain); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy relations (social domain) and having a legal title to occupation (legal domain).

ETHOS classifies homelessness people into four broad conceptual categories:

- **rooflessness:** without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough,
- **houselessness:** with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter,
- **living in insecure housing:** threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence, and
- **living in inadequate housing:** in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding.

## **Family**

A family is defined by the ABS as two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household.

Each separately identified couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship forms the basis of a family. Some households contain more than one family.

Visiting families are not included as part of the household, and the relationships of other

visitors are not coded. A household containing only a visiting family (e.g. a family at a holiday home) is coded to a household type of visitors only.

Where all persons present are aged under 15 years, or where information for each person has been imputed, the household is deemed not classifiable to a family. Of people listed as temporarily absent, only spouse(s) and family children are used in coding family composition.

## **Family Type**

Families are classified in terms of the relationships that exist between a single family reference person and each other member of that family. The Family Type variable distinguishes between different types of families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other blood relationships, in that order of preference. Family Type is derived from people enumerated in the household who usually reside there, and who share a familial relationship. Partners and dependent children usually present but temporarily absent are also included in this derivation.

Note: There is no provision for 'other related individuals' in second and third families. If more than three families are found in a household, only three families are separately classified and any other people are classified as either related family members or non-family members as appropriate.

**See also** Family.

## **Family violence**

Violence against a person by any family member (e.g. sibling, resident and non-resident family members).

## **Flow measures of homelessness**

Flow measure is an estimate of the number of people experiencing at least one period of homelessness over a given period of time, for example, over a 12 month period.

**See** Incidence measures of homelessness.

## **Full/Part-Time Student status**

The Census records the full/part-time status of students.

## **General Social Survey (GSS)**

The General Social Survey aims to collect data for persons aged 18 years and over on a range of social dimensions from the same individual to enable analysis of the interrelationships in social circumstances and outcomes, including the exploration of multiple advantage and disadvantage experienced in Australia.

## **Grey Nomads**

Grey nomads are defined as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats on Census night, and reported having no usual address. The majority of these grey nomads were enumerated in holiday destinations.

## **Group household**

The ABS defines a group household as a household consisting of two or more unrelated people where all persons are aged 15 years and over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households.

An unrelated child (e.g. boarder) under the age of 15 who lives in a household with one or more usual residents, is coded as forming a parent-child relationship within that household. These households become family households, not group households.

## **Highest Year of School Completed**

The Census records the highest level of primary or secondary school a person has completed. Highest year of school completed is classified to the **Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED)**.

This classification has changed since the 2001 Census. In 2001 it included a category 'Still at school'. The 'Still at school' category is excluded from the 2011 and 2006 classification. This allows the level of highest educational attainment to be determined for people still at school.

## **Homeless Enumeration Strategy**

The Homeless Enumeration Strategy is a nation-wide initiative designed to complement the mainstream Census and other special strategies to maximise the overall enumeration of the homeless population. It specifically targets the enumeration of rough sleepers, couch surfers and persons in supported accommodation for the homeless. For more information see **Information Paper: 2011 Census Special Enumeration Strategies, 2011** (cat no. 2911.0.55.004).

## **Homelessness**

In accordance with the ABS statistical definition, when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate, or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

**See Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0).

## **Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG)**

Advisory group to the ABS on the development, collection, compilation, production and dissemination of robust statistics for the use in analysing, understanding and reporting on homelessness in Australia.

## **Hours Worked**

The Census records the number of hours worked in all jobs held during the week before Census night, by employed people aged 15 years and over. This excludes any time off but includes any overtime or extra time worked. Hours worked, when used in combination with

Labour Force Status, provides information on full-time and part-time employment. For Census purposes, a person is considered to be working full-time if they worked 35 hours or more in all jobs during the week prior to Census night.

## **Houseboat**

Occupied houseboats have been classified as occupied private dwellings since the 1986 Census, and therefore receive household forms. Unoccupied houseboats are not counted.

## **Household**

A household is defined as one or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same private dwelling. Under this definition, all occupants of a dwelling form a household and complete one form. Therefore, for Census purposes, the total number of households is equal to the total number of occupied private dwellings as a Census form is completed for each household from which dwelling information for the household is obtained.

## **Household Composition**

The Census records the type of household within a dwelling. Household Composition indicates whether a family is present or not and whether or not other unrelated household members are present.

A maximum of three families can be coded to a household. Lone person households can contain visitors. Visitor only households can contain overseas visitors.

## **Household form**

The household form is the primary means for collecting Census data and is used in all private dwellings. A personal form records person characteristics in cases where a household form is not appropriate. If there are more than six people in a household on Census night, a personal form is completed for the seventh person and any subsequent persons.

## **Household Income**

This variable is the sum of the individual incomes of each resident present in the household on Census night. If any resident aged 15 years and over is temporarily absent, or does not state their income, then household income is not derived for that household.

In most cases, the income of visitors to a household is excluded from the calculation of household income. The exception to this is households that comprise only visitors. Household income is calculated for these households in order to collect data on household income in tourist areas.

The 2011 and 2006 Censuses collected individual income in ranges, so before these could be summed to a household level a specific dollar amount needed to be imputed for each person. Median incomes for each range, derived using data from the 2003-04 and 2007-08 Survey of Income and Housing, were used for the purpose of compiling household income measures.

This method, which imputes personal income values within reported individual income ranges, was selected as the best practical approximation that would result in the majority of households being included in the same Census household income range that would have

been derived had individuals reported their incomes in dollar amounts rather than in ranges. The approximations are expected to generally support analyses looking at various other characteristics of both persons and households in terms of broad household income ranges.

The imputation used in deriving household income is likely to understate some household incomes, specifically lower household incomes in general but particularly for single income households. Single income households with lower income levels are most affected by the imputation methodology understating their incomes. For example, for single parent family households with the parent under 45 years of age, analysis shows that nearly twice as many such households were likely to be allocated to the low income range of \$250 to \$349 per week than would have been the case had incomes been reported in dollar amounts (with fewer than expected households in higher income ranges). Similarly for sole person households where the resident is aged 65 years and over, analysis shows the number of households that were likely to be allocated to the low income range of \$250 to \$349 per week was about 15% higher than would have been the case had incomes been reported in dollar amounts.

A more general issue with individual income reporting in the Census is that studies have shown individuals tend to understate their incomes compared with the amounts that would be reported in surveys designed specifically to measure income.

For the above reasons, care should be exercised in any use of Census household income information, which relies on the imputed values. Similar care should be taken when using 2001 Census data.

## **Household Type**

**See** Household Composition.

## **Hours worked in all jobs last week**

Records the number of hours worked in all jobs held during the week before Census night, by employed people aged 15 years and over. This excludes any time off but includes any overtime or extra time worked.

## **Housing loan repayments (monthly)**

Housing loan repayments are those which are being paid by a household to purchase the dwelling in which it was enumerated (also applicable to caravans). The Census collects this information in single dollars up to \$9,999. However, for practical purposes this information is recoded to a specific number of ranges.

## **Improvised dwelling**

**See** Dwelling, Dwelling Structure.

## **Imputation**

Imputation is a statistical process for predicting values where no response was provided to a question and a response could not be derived.

Where no Census form is returned, the number of males and females in 'non-contact' private dwellings may be imputed. In addition, the following key demographic variables may also be imputed if they are 'Not stated':

- Age,
- Place of Usual Residence, and
- Registered Marital Status.

The imputation method used for the 2011 and 2006 Censuses is known as 'hotdecking'. In general this method involves locating a donor record and copying the relevant responses to the record requiring imputation. The donor record will have similar characteristics and must also have the required variable(s) stated. In addition the donor record will be located geographically as close as possible to the location of the record to be imputed. The match must occur within the same Capital City or Balance of State. When a suitable match is found, then the copying of the response(s) from the donor record to the variable(s) that have missing values can occur.

The methodology for imputation is tailored to two situations. Firstly, where no Census form has been returned and secondly where a partially completed form was returned.

**No Census form returned - private dwelling:** Where a Census collector has identified that a private dwelling was occupied on Census night but a Census form was not returned, the number of males and females normally in the dwelling and their key demographic variables may require imputation. In these cases, the non-demographic variables are set to 'Not stated' or 'Not applicable'.

The 'No Census form returned' scenario has two variations. Firstly, where no form was returned but the collector was able to ascertain the number of males and females from a resident of the dwelling, or in a small number of cases a building manager or neighbour. And secondly, where no form was returned and the number of males and females remains unknown.

For records where the number of males and females is unknown, two imputation processes are required. Initially these records must have their number of males and females imputed using hotdecking. Then a second imputation (also using hotdecking) is run to impute the key demographic variables.

To hotdeck the number of males and females, the donor records must meet several conditions:

- They must be records where no Census form was returned but where the number of males and females was ascertained by the collector,
- They must have a similar Dwelling Structure to the record to be imputed, and
- They must be located geographically as close as possible to the location of the record to be imputed.

The number of males and females are the only data copied from the donor record in the first hotdecking process.

In the next process, the records which have just had their number of males and females imputed, are subjected to the same hotdecking process as those records where the number of males and females had been ascertained.

This hotdecking process imputes the key demographic variables. Again the donor records must meet several conditions:

- They must be records where everyone within the dwelling provided all their



demographic characteristics,

- They must have similar Dwelling Structure and Dwelling Location,
- They must have identical counts of males and females,
- They must be located geographically as close as possible to the location of the record to be imputed.

The key demographic variables are then copied from the donor records to the records requiring imputation.

The method of imputing the counts of males and females in previous Censuses was to use the average number of males and females in responding private dwellings for that Collection District. This method was discovered to have over-imputed the 2001 Census male and female counts.

**No Census form returned - non private dwelling:** Where a person in a non-private dwelling did not return a form, their demographic characteristics are copied from another person in a similar non-private dwelling using Type of Non-Private Dwelling.

**Census form returned:** Where a form was returned, some or all of the demographic characteristics may require imputation. If Registered Marital Status and/or Place of Usual Residence are 'Not stated' they are imputed using hotdecking, whereas Age is imputed based on distributions obtained from previous Censuses. Registered Marital Status imputation is carried out by finding a similar person in a similar responding dwelling based on the variables:

- Sex,
- Relationship in Private Dwelling,
- Age,
- Dwelling Type, and
- Type of Non-Private Dwelling.

Registered Marital Status is only imputed for persons aged 15 years and over, and set to 'Not applicable' for persons aged under 15 years.

Where a complete usual address on Census night is not provided, the information that is provided is used to impute an appropriate **CD** (and **SLA**). A similar person in a similar dwelling is located and missing usual residence fields are copied to the imputed variable.

These are based on the variables:

- Residential Status in a Non-Private Dwelling,
- Dwelling Location, and
- Type of Non-Private Dwelling.

Where date of birth or age details are incomplete or missing, the variable Age is imputed based on distributions for particular populations (for example, male or female; marital status; and state/territory of usual residence). Factors affecting age imputation include any reported labour force activity, educational institution attending and other family member relationships and ages.

## **Incidence measures of homelessness**

Estimates the number of people experiencing at least one period of homelessness over a given period of time, for example, over a 12 month period (also known as flow measures). They may include multiple incidences of homelessness for some individuals.

## **Income**

Each Census respondent aged 15 years and over is asked to indicate the range within which their gross income from all sources lies (rather than their exact income).

Gross income includes wages, salaries, overtime, business or farm income (less operating expenses), rents received, dividends, interest, superannuation, maintenance (child support), workers' compensation, and government pensions and allowances (including all payments for family assistance, labour market assistance, youth and student support, and support for the aged, carers and people with a disability).

As income from most sources is reported before deduction of expenses incurred in the earning of the income, these incomes are always a positive figure. However, income from some sources may be negative. Income from own unincorporated enterprise and income from rental property are collected net of expenses incurred in the raising of income, so may be negative. This may result in a negative total income.

While there is a tendency for incomes to be slightly understated in the Census, the distribution is largely consistent with that obtained from the ABS income surveys. Therefore, Census income data is useful as an indicator of relative advantage or disadvantage and economic well being.

Testing of the topic has shown that there is a general tendency for those not in the labour force to leave this question unanswered, as they consider income only applies to payments received as a result of employment. Similarly, pensioners and self funded retirees sometimes state that they receive no income as they do not regard their pension as income.

## **Indigenous personal form**

See Interviewer household form.

## **Indigenous Special Enumeration Strategy (ISES)**

The ABS has implemented procedures tailored to the enumeration of Indigenous people living in discrete communities since the 1976 Census. The 2011 Census procedures built on this experience with the 2006 Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy (IES). This strategy ensured that procedures were tailored in response to each Indigenous community's requirements. For more information see **Information Paper: 2011 Census Special Enumeration Strategies, 2011** (cat no. 2911.0.55.004).

## **Indigenous Status**

The question about Indigenous origins on the Census form asks whether each person is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. Torres Strait Islanders are the descendants of the Indigenous people of the Torres Strait, between the tip of Cape York and Papua New Guinea.

## **Individual Income**

Individual incomes are collected as ranges in the Census. To enable these range values to be summed, information from the Survey of Income and Housing, which collects income as

individual values, is used to estimate the median income within each bracket collected by the Census. The relevant median value for each family/household member is then summed to produce family or household income.

### **Industry of employment**

Industry of employment describes the industries in which employed people aged 15 years and over work. The **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC)** was used in classifying the responses given to the industry questions for the 2006 Census.

### **Interviewer household form**

The interviewer household form is used in nominated discrete Indigenous communities (communities of Indigenous people in which language differences or other factors make use of the standard self-enumeration forms impractical). The interviewer household form is an interview based Census form which is used to record the details of up to 12 persons in a household, and some dwelling data. If there are more than 12 persons in a dwelling a second interviewer household form is used to record the details of subsequent persons.

### **Introduced random error**

Under the **Census and Statistics Act 1905** it is an offence to release any information collected under the Act that is likely to enable identification of any particular individual or organisation. Introduced random error is used to ensure that no data are released which could risk the identification of individuals in the statistics.

Care has been taken in the tables which are presented to minimise the risk of identifying individuals. In addition, a technique has been applied to randomly adjust cell values. Random adjustment of the data is considered to be the most satisfactory technique for avoiding the release of identifiable Census data. The technique has been applied and all cells are slightly adjusted to prevent any identifiable data being exposed. These adjustments result in small introduced random errors. However the information value of the table as a whole is not impaired.

It is not possible to determine which individual figures have been affected by random error adjustments, but the small variance which may be associated with derived totals can, for the most part, be ignored.

### **Labour force**

For Census purposes, the labour force includes people aged 15 years and over who work for payment or profit, or as an unpaid helper in a family business, during the week prior to Census night; have a job from which they are on leave or otherwise temporarily absent; are on strike or stood down temporarily; or do not have a job but are actively looking for work and available to start work.

Persons classified as being in the labour force as those employed (i.e. the first three groups above); and unemployed people (i.e. the last group above).

People aged 15 years and over who are neither employed nor unemployed are classified as not in the labour force. This includes people who are retired, pensioners and people engaged solely in home duties.

### **Labour Force Status**

In the Census the Labour Force Status variable is derived for all people aged 15 years and over. It classifies people as employed working full-time, part-time or away from work, unemployed looking for full-time work, looking for part-time work, or not in the labour force. The category 'Employed, away from work' also includes persons who stated they worked but who did not state the number of hours worked.

### **Landlord Type**

The Census provides information on the type of landlord for rented dwellings. It applies to all households who are renting the dwelling (including caravans, etc. in caravan parks) in which they are enumerated on Census night.

### **Level of Highest Educational Attainment**

Records the highest educational achievement a person aged 15 years and over has attained. It lists qualifications and other educational attainments regardless of the particular field of study or the type of institution in which the study was undertaken.

### **Location of dwelling**

See Dwelling Location.

### **Lone parent**

A lone parent is a person who has no spouse or partner usually resident in the household, but who forms a parent-child relationship with at least one child usually resident in the household. The child may be either dependent or non-dependent.

### **Lone person household**

Any private dwelling in which there is only one usual resident at least 15 years of age, is classified as being a lone person household.

### **Marina**

See Caravans, cabins, houseboats, cabins etc.

### **Mean**

The mean is calculated by summing the values of all observations in a set of data and then dividing by the number of observations in the set. Thus:  $\text{mean} = \frac{\text{sum of all the observed values}}{\text{number of observations}}$ .

### **Median**

The median is the value that divides a set of data exactly in half. It is the middle value when the values in a set of data are arranged in order. If there is no middle value (i.e. there is an even number of values) then the median is calculated by determining the mean of the two middle values. Thus:  $\text{median} = \text{the middle value of a set of data}$ .

### **New migrants**

A person who has arrived in Australia in the Census year who has been in the country no more than 7 months (i.e. in the Census year).

## **Non-dependent child**

A person aged 15 years or more, who is a natural, adopted, step, or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the same household, who is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and who has no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household.

## **Non-private dwelling**

See Type of Non-Private Dwelling.

## **Non-School Qualification: Level of Education**

Level of education is defined as the field of study of the highest completed non-school qualification.

## **Not in the labour force**

Persons not in the labour force are those persons who, during the week prior to Census night, were neither employed nor unemployed. They include persons who were keeping house (unpaid), retired, voluntarily inactive, permanently unable to work, in gaol, trainee teachers, members of contemplative religious orders, and persons whose only activity during the week prior to Census night was jury service or unpaid voluntary work for a charitable organisation.

## **Number of Bedrooms in Private Dwelling**

Measures the number of bedrooms in each occupied private dwelling, including caravans in caravan parks.

## **Occupation**

Occupation is collected in the Census for all employed people aged 15 years and over. Two questions are used in the Census: 'In the main job held last week, what was the person's occupation - Give full title', and 'What are the main tasks that the person usually performs in the occupation...'

Collecting both occupation title and task information ensures more accurate coding of occupations. The 2011 and 2006 Censuses use the **Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)**. For more information see **Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations** (cat. no. 1220.0). The **Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO)** Second Edition was used in the 2001 Census.

## **Occupied private dwelling**

See Dwelling.

## **Older persons travelling on Census night**

Includes persons in dwellings where all persons in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in a caravan, cabin or houseboat, who reported having a usual address elsewhere on Census night.

## **Overcrowding**

Households living in dwellings requiring extra bedrooms according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS).

**See** Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS).

## **Overestimation**

In the context of estimating homelessness overestimation occurs when persons who are represented in the underlying data set are misclassified as homeless when they are not.

**See also** Underenumeration, Underestimation.

## **Overseas visitor**

**See** Visitors to Australia.

## **Partner**

A person identified as being in a couple relationship with another person usually resident in the same household is a partner. The couple relationship is established through reporting of either a registered or de facto marriage, and includes same-sex couples.

## **Partner violence**

Any incident of sexual assault, threatened sexual assault, physical assault or threatened or attempted physical assault by a current and/or previous partner.

## **Personal form**

The Census personal form records details for one person only. It contains the same questions as the household form, but excludes the household questions. The personal form is used:

- for households with more than six people: the household form accommodates six people, so one personal form is completed for each extra person,
- for privacy: if any person in a household prefers, for privacy reasons, not to be recorded on the household form, then a personal form and a privacy envelope are issued for that person, and
- in non-private dwellings: one personal form is completed for each person in a non-private dwelling on Census night.

## **Personal Safety Survey (PSS)**

The Personal Safety Survey aims to collect information about men's and women's experience of physical or sexual assault or threat by male and female perpetrators. Experiences of the different types of violence, since the age of 15, by different types of male and female perpetrators (including current partner, previous partner, boyfriend/girlfriend or date, other known man or women, and stranger) is explored. More detailed information, such as where the incident occurred and what action was taken, can be obtained for most recent incidents of each of the different types of violence by a male and female perpetrator. Additional information is also collected about respondent experiences of current and previous partner violence such as frequency and fears of violence, incidents of stalking and

other forms of harassment and general feelings of safety.

### **Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out**

The ABS homelessness operational group for people considered to be homeless who were in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out on Census night. See Explanatory Notes and Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology for who is included in this group.

### **Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless**

The ABS homelessness operational group for people considered to be homeless who were in supported accommodation for the homeless on Census night. The 2011 and 2006 data was collected in the Census of Population and Housing and include people enumerated under the Census 'list' and 'green' sticker strategies. The 2001 data was taken from the Australia Institute of Health and Welfare Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) collection, as SAAP details collected under the 'list' and 'green sticker' strategies were not retained. See Explanatory Notes and Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology for more information.

### **Persons staying temporarily with other households**

The ABS homelessness operational group for people considered to be homeless who were staying temporarily with other households on Census night. This group also includes some people who were homeless who are in 'visitor only' households.

Some people who are homeless are likely to be underestimated in this category such as youth, those escaping domestic and family violence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. See Explanatory Notes for more information.

### **Persons staying in boarding houses**

The ABS homelessness operational group for people considered to be homeless who were staying in boarding houses on Census night. Estimation techniques are designed to take account of legal and illegal boarding houses in the estimates. As a result this category is larger than the number of people enumerated in the non-private dwellings classified as "boarding house, private hotel". See Explanatory Notes and Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology for more information about homeless persons staying in boarding houses.

### **Persons in other temporary lodging**

The ABS homelessness operational group for people considered to be homeless who had no usual address and were in other temporary lodging: 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' on Census night. See Explanatory Notes and Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology for more information about homeless people staying in other temporary lodging.

### **Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings**

The ABS homelessness operational group for people considered to be homeless who were living in severely crowded dwellings on Census night. This is operationalised in the Census as those people who were enumerated in a private dwelling that they were usual residents of and, according to the **Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS)**, the dwelling required four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate them. See Explanatory Notes and Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology for more information about homeless people living in severely crowded dwellings and CNOS.

## **Persons living in other crowded dwellings**

The ABS group showing people who were marginally housed: people who were living in other crowded dwellings on Census night. This is operationalised in the Census as those people who were enumerated in a private dwelling that they were usual residents of and, according to the **Canadian National Occupancy Standard** (CNOS), the dwelling required three extra bedrooms to accommodate them. See Explanatory Notes and Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology for more information on this group and CNOS.

## **Persons in other improvised dwellings**

The ABS group showing people who were marginally housed: people who were enumerated on Census night in the dwelling category of an 'improvised dwelling, tent or sleepers out' who reported either being 'at home' on Census night or having no usual address, and are not considered, on balance, to be homeless. See Explanatory Notes and Appendix 2: Estimation Methodology.

## **Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks**

The ABS group showing people who were marginally housed and living in caravan parks where they reported a usual address in a caravan, cabin or houseboat in a caravan park and are unlikely to have accommodation alternatives. See Explanatory Notes and Appendix 2: Methodology Used to Calculate Homelessness Estimates for more information about persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks.

## **Place of birth**

See Country of birth.

## **Place of enumeration**

The place of enumeration is the place at which the person is counted i.e. where he/she spent Census night, which may not be where he/she usually lives.

## **Place of usual residence**

This is the place where a person usually lives. It may, or may not be the place where the person was counted on Census night.

## **Place of usual residence five years ago**

Place of usual residence five years ago identifies a person's place of usual residence five years before the Census.

## **Population**

Census count of persons based on their reported place of usual residence.

## **Post Enumeration Survey (PES)**

A measure of the undercount in the Census is obtained from a sample survey of households undertaken shortly after the Census, called the Post Enumeration Survey (PES). It collects information about where people were on Census night and their characteristics, which are compared to the actual Census forms. The PES found an undercount of 1.8% in the 2001 Census, 2.7% in the 2006 Census and 1.7% in the 2011 Census.



The PES is only conducted in private dwellings therefore it cannot be used to estimate the undercount of homeless people on Census night.

### **Prevalence measure of homelessness**

Measure estimating how many people experience homelessness at one point in time, on Census night (also known as point-in-time estimate). A prevalence estimate should ensure that each person is included only once in the estimate if they were homeless at a particular point in time.

### **Private dwelling**

See Dwelling.

### **Proficiency in Spoken English**

Proficiency in Spoken English refers to persons who speak a language other than English at home, who report their self-assessed proficiency in spoken English. It should be regarded as an indicator of a person's ability to speak English rather than a definitive measure of his/her ability and should be interpreted with care.

### **Registered Marital Status**

Registered Marital Status reports responses to the question 'What is the person's present marital status?' and refers to the legal status of the person, and not necessarily his/her current living arrangement. The partners in a registered marriage must be of the opposite sex as same-sex relationships cannot be registered as marriages in Australia. Marital status is applicable to people aged 15 years and over.

### **Relationship in Household**

This variable describes the relationship of each person in a family to the Family reference person or, where a person is not part of a family, that person's relationship to the Household reference person.

Children who are usually resident in the household are classified as dependent if they form a parent-child relationship and are either 0-14 years of age; or they are 15-24 years of age and also a full-time student (in secondary or tertiary education). Children who are aged 15-24 years who are not full-time students and children aged 25 years and over are classified as non-dependent children. Children who are aged 25 years and over with a child or partner of his/her own, or who are full-time students aged 15-24 years of age with a child or partner of his/her own, are classified according to that relationship.

### **Remoteness area**

Within the **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)**, the Remoteness classification comprises five categories, each of which identifies a (non-contiguous) region in Australia being a grouping of Collection Districts (CDs) sharing a particular degree of remoteness. The degrees of remoteness range from 'highly accessible' (i.e. major cities) to 'very remote'. The 2011 Remoteness structure will be released as Volume 5 of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) in December 2012.

### **Rent (weekly)**

The Census records the individual dollar amounts of rent paid by households on a weekly basis for the dwelling in which they were enumerated on Census night. This includes caravans etc. in caravan parks. The categories range from \$0-\$9,999 in single dollar amounts.

## **Residence**

**See** Dwelling, Household, Usual residence.

## **Residential Status in a Non-Private Dwelling**

The Census records whether people enumerated in non-private dwellings (such as motels, hospitals, colleges etc.) are staying there as either: members of staff of the accommodation (e.g. owner, proprietor, porter, cook, teacher, warden, family of owner or family of staff); or residents, guests, patients, inmates, etc.

No information on family relationships is available for people in non-private dwellings because they are enumerated using personal forms.

## **SAAP**

**See** Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

## **Scope and coverage**

The Census of Population and Housing aims to enumerate every person who spent Census night, August 2011, 2006 and 2001 in Australia. This includes people in the six states, the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory, Jervis Bay Territory, and the external territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The other Australian external territories (Norfolk Island, and minor islands such as Heard and McDonald Islands) are outside the scope of the Australian Census.

People who leave Australia but who are not required to undertake migration formalities, for example those on oil and gas rigs off the Australian coast, and expeditioners to the Australian Antarctic Territory (and other locations) are also included in the Census. They are coded to Off-Shore Collection Districts.

All private dwellings, except diplomatic dwellings, are included in the Census, whether occupied or unoccupied. Caravans in caravan parks, and manufactured homes in manufactured home estates, are counted only if occupied. For the 2011 and 2006 Censuses, unoccupied residences in retirement villages (self-contained) are included. In previous Censuses they were excluded. Occupied non-private dwellings, such as hospitals, prisons, hotels, etc. are also included.

For more detail see **Census Dictionary, 2011** (cat. no. 2901.0).

## **Self-enumeration**

Self-enumeration is the term used to describe the way Census data are collected. The Census forms are generally completed by householders (or individuals in non-private dwellings) rather than by interviewers, although interviewers are available in some areas if required.

## **Sex**

The sex of each person enumerated in the Census is recorded as being either male or female.

## **SLA**

**See** Statistical Local Area.

## **Sleepers-out**

**See** Dwelling Structure.

## **Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas - Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)**

The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) is a general socio-economic index that summarises a wide range of information about the economic and social resources of people and households within an area. Because this index focuses on disadvantage, only measures of relative disadvantage are included. This means that a high score (or decile) reflects a relative lack of disadvantage rather than relative advantage.

This index summarises 17 different measures, such as low income, low education, high unemployment and unskilled occupations. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage in general. For example, an area could have a low score if there are (among other things) many households with low income, many people with no qualifications, or many people in low-skilled occupations.

A high score indicates a relative lack of disadvantage in general. For example, an area may have a high score if there are (among other things) few households with low incomes, few people with no qualifications or in low-skilled occupations.

## **Stock measures**

**See** Prevalence measures of homelessness.

## **South Sea Islander**

Australian South Sea Islanders are the descendants of South Sea Islanders brought to Australia as indentured labour around the turn of the twentieth century and have been identified by legislation as a disadvantaged minority group.

This group excludes later voluntary migrants from the South Pacific region.

## **Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) collection**

From the 1st of July, 2011, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (see SAAP) National Data Collection was replaced with the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) collection. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) compile data for the SHS.

The SHS collection provides data about pathways into and out of homelessness and type of support provided by specialist homelessness service agencies. It identifies individual clients as well as support periods and children who are counted as individual clients. Family information is also more accurate in the SHS collection compared to the SAAP collection. Information about previous episodes of homelessness and people turned away from homelessness agencies are available. The data provides snapshots of homelessness at a given point in time, which was not previously available with the SAAP National Data

Collection.

## **Special Indigenous personal form**

See Interviewer household form.

## **Spouse**

See Partner.

## **State and territory**

The State/Territory is the largest spatial unit in the **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)**. There are six states and five territories in the ASGC: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Jervis Bay Territory and the external Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Jervis Bay Territory, and the Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands are grouped as one spatial unit at the State/Territory level in the category of Other Territories.

States/Territories consist of one or more Statistical Divisions. In aggregate, they cover Australia without gaps or overlaps.

## **Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s)**

The Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) is the second smallest geographic area defined in the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), the smallest being the Mesh Block. The SA1 has been designed for use in the Census of Population and Housing as the smallest unit for the processing and release of Census data. For the 2011 Census, SA1s will also be the basis of output for most data, the exception being some Place of Work destination zones. For 2011, SA1s also serve as the basic building block in the **ASGS** and are used for the aggregation of statistics to larger Census geographic areas.

## **Statistical Division (SD)**

A Statistical Division (SD) is an **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)** defined area which represents a large, general purpose, regional type geographic area. SDs represent relatively homogeneous regions characterised by identifiable social and economic links between the inhabitants and between the economic units within the region, under the unifying influence of one or more major towns or cities. They consist of one or more Statistical Subdivisions (SSDs) and cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. They do not cross state or territory boundaries and are the largest statistical building blocks of states and territories.

In New South Wales, proclaimed New South Wales Government Regions coincide with SDs except for North Coast, which consists of the SDs of Richmond-Tweed and Mid-North Coast.

In the remaining states and territories, SDs are designed in line with the ASGC general purpose regional spatial unit definition.

For more information and a list of SDs in each state/territory, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2006** (cat. no. 1216.0). Maps are available from ABS Information Consultancy.

## **Statistical Local Area (SLA)**

The Statistical Local Area (SLA) is an Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) defined area which consists of one or more Collection Districts (CDs). SLAs are Local Government Areas (LGAs), or parts thereof. Where there is no incorporated body of local government, SLAs are defined to cover the unincorporated areas. SLAs cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

For more information and a list of the Statistical Local Areas in each state/territory, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2006** (cat. no. 1216.0). Maps are available from ABS Information Consultancy.

## **Student**

See Full/Part-Time student status.

## **Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)**

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) was established in 1985 to consolidate a number of Commonwealth, State and Territory government programs assisting people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness, including women escaping domestic violence.

On 1 January 2009, SAAP was replaced by the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and from the 1st of July 2011, the SAAP collection was replaced with the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) collection. The final SAAP program (SAAP V), governed by the Supported Assistance Act 1994, specified that the overall aim of SAAP was to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services, in order to help people who are homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence:

- to resolve crisis,
- to re-establish family links where appropriate, and
- to re-establish a capacity to live independently of SAAP.

The states and territories were responsible for managing the SAAP program, while services were provided largely by independent agencies. In 2007-08 approximately 1,550 non government, community or local government organisations were funded nationally under the program. Such organisations ranged from small stand-alone agencies with single outlets to larger auspice bodies with multiple outlets. They provided accommodation and support services to a range of groups including homeless families, singles, young people, and women and children escaping domestic violence.

## **Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)**

The Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) aims to measure the prevalence of disability in Australia and levels of support needed, as well as providing a demographic and socio-economic profile of people with disability and older people (65 years and over) compared with the general population. It also provides information about people who provide care to older people and people with disability.

## **Temporarily absent**

The Census form seeks information about people who usually reside in a dwelling but who are temporarily absent on Census night.

## **Tent**

**See** Dwelling Structure.

## **Tenure Type**

Tenure Type describes whether a household is purchasing, rents or owns, the dwelling in which it was enumerated on Census night, or whether the household occupies it under another arrangement. Tenure Type is derived from the responses to a series of questions. It is applicable to all occupied private dwellings.

## **Territory**

**See** Australia, State and territory.

## **Torres Strait Islander people**

People identified as being of Torres Strait Islander origin. May also include people identified as being of both Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal origin.

## **Type of Educational Institution Attending**

The 2011 Census records the type of educational institution being attended by people who are full/part-time students. The categories cover pre-school through to tertiary institutions.

## **Type of Non-Private Dwelling**

The Census records the type of non-private dwelling in which people were enumerated on Census night. Non-private dwellings are establishments which provide a communal type of accommodation. Examples of categories are Hotel, motel; Boarding house, private hotel; Public hospital (not psychiatric); and Child care institution.

## **Underenumeration**

Census collectors direct extensive efforts toward locating dwellings and households within districts, however locating them all is sometimes not possible. Some dwellings may not be identified. For example, in commercial areas, flats above or behind shops may be difficult to find. Also, particularly where contact is not made at delivery, flats behind or attached to private dwellings may not be included in the Census. Analysis of the undercount in previous Censuses has shown that people away from their usual residence on Census night (for example, travelling, camping, staying in a non-private dwelling, or visiting friends) are more likely to be missed than people at home on Census night.

Even when a household is found, undercount is possible if not all members of the household are included on the form (for example, if there are more than six people in the household and no extra forms are obtained) or if the household, or a member of the household, refuses to cooperate and complete a Census form.

A measure of the extent of underenumeration is obtained from the Post Enumeration Survey (PES). The official population estimates produced by the ABS take into account the results of the PES. However, the Census counts are not adjusted. The PES is only conducted in private dwellings therefore it cannot be used to estimate the underenumeration of homeless

people on Census night.

**See also** Post Enumeration Survey (PES).

### **Underestimation**

The difficulty in isolating unique characteristics of the homeless population within the Census of Population and Housing can result in the misclassification of homeless persons, and subsequent underestimation of the homeless population. The complexity and diversity of persons homeless experiences, and person's not identifying themselves as homeless, increases the likelihood of underestimation of homelessness in particular groups, including Youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', and people escaping domestic and family violence.

### **Unemployed**

**See** Labour force status.

### **Unoccupied private dwelling**

**See** Dwelling.

### **Usual address**

Usual address information is used to code usual residence.

**See** Usual residence.

### **Usual residence**

Usual residence data provide information on the usually resident population of an area, and on the internal migration patterns at the state and regional levels. The 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses had three questions on usual residence that asked where the person usually lived on Census night, and where the person usually lived one year ago and five years ago.

Family variables are only derived for people counted at their usual residence. Temporarily absent persons are used to classify types of relationships and families existing in a household, but they are not used in the derivation of any other Census characteristics or in other Census output. If all members of a family are absent from their usual residence, no family records are created for them. Family and household structures are based on persons usually resident. If all members of a family or household are temporarily absent, the family or household is not counted.

### **Visitor only households**

For the purposes of homelessness estimation and estimating marginal housing, visitor only households are those dwellings where all persons in the dwelling reported no usual address and there were no usual residents.

**See also** Visitors to a household, Usual residence.

### **Visitors to a household**

Characteristics of individual visitors to a household are available at the household of enumeration. Visitors may also be tabulated according to their CD of usual residence but

cannot be placed back to their dwelling of usual residence.

All household and family classifications in the Census are based on the relationships of people usually residing in the household. This applies when there is at least one person aged 15 years and over present. In these classifications, people temporarily absent are included, and visitors are excluded.

The relationship of visitors to one another, or to any resident (including cases where all the people enumerated are visitors) is not further classified.

Households containing only visitors are excluded from household mobility variables.

### **Visitors to Australia**

Question 8 on the Census form, 'Where does the person usually live?' allows the identification of people who are usually resident in another country. These overseas visitors are identified as a separate category for all applicable variables.

### **Voluntary work for an organisation or group**

For Censuses 2011 and 2006, the number of people who spent time doing unpaid voluntary work through an organisation or group, in the 12 months prior to Census night was measured. It excludes work done:

- as part of paid employment,
- if main reason is to qualify for Government benefit, and
- in a family business.

### **Weekly personal income**

Provides an indicator of the gross income (including pensions and allowances) that persons aged 15 years and over usually receives each week.

### **Year of Arrival in Australia**

The 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses record the year of arrival in Australia for people born overseas who intend staying in Australia for at least one year. For the 2011 and 2006 Censuses, the category 'Overseas visitor' consists of those people who report they usually reside in another country.

## **Abbreviations**

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Aus	Australia
CNOS	Canadian National Occupancy Standard
CSA	Census and Statistics Act 19050



ETHOS	European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion
FaHCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
GSS	General Social Survey
HSRG	Homelessness Statistics Reference Group
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
NSO	National Statistical Office
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
PES	Post Enumeration Survey
PSS	Personal Safety Survey
PTA	Persons Temporarily Absent
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Services
SLCD	Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset
Tas.	Tasmania
THM	Transitional Housing Management
Vic.	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

## Definition of Homelessness (Appendix)

### APPENDIX 1 DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

#### OVERVIEW OF THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

The ABS definition of homelessness is informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'home'lessness, not rooflessness. It emphasises the core elements of 'home' in Anglo American and European interpretations of the meaning of home as identified in research evidence (Mallett, 2004). These elements may include a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety and the ability to control living space. Homelessness is therefore a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'.

In brief, the ABS statistical definition is that:

When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate, or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The definition has been constructed from a conceptual framework centred around the following elements:

- Adequacy of the dwelling,

- Security of tenure in the dwelling, and
- Control of, and access to space for social relations.

The elements are explained in more detail in ABS **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0).

People must lack one or more of these elements to be defined as homeless. However, people who lack one or more of these elements are not necessarily classified as homeless. While homelessness is not a choice, some people may chose to live in situations that might parallel the living situations of people who are homeless. For example, people may be living in a shed while building a home on their own property, or on holiday travelling and staying with friends. These people have choice because they have the capacity to access other accommodation that is safe, adequate and provides for social relations. Having access to accommodation alternatives is contingent on having the financial, physical, psychological **and** personal means to access these alternatives (see ABS **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0).

## **HOW THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS INFORMS THE METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE CENSUS**

The ABS **Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness** (cat. no. 4922.0) outlines which elements of the statistical definition are used in determining homeless living situations in each of the homeless operational groups.

The hierarchy below briefly outlines which elements of the definition are employed to determine the group as being homeless.

## **REFERENCES**

Mallett, S (2004) '**Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature**', The Sociological Review, 52 (1), 62-89.

## How does the hierarchy relate to output categories?

An X indicates what people in this group lack this aspect of the element to determine that their living circumstance is homelessness

		Security of tenure in the dwelling		Adequacy of the dwelling		Control of, access to social relations		Accommodation alternatives of the person				
		no tenure	initial tenure short & not extendable(a)	no basic facilities exist	structure of dwelling is inadequate	no control or access to space	no privacy	no financial	no personal	no psychological	no physical	
Homeless Operational Groups	Improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out											
	improvised dwellings rough sleepers	X		X		X	X					
		X		X		X	X					
	Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	X				X	X					
		some transitional housing		X			X	X				
	Persons staying temporarily with other households											
		Persons staying temporarily with friends or relatives	X				X	X				
		Persons staying temporarily in visitor only households	X					X	X	X**	X**	X**
			Persons staying in boarding houses	X					X	X		
	Persons staying in other temporary lodging (b)	X					X?	X?				
Severe Crowding												
		those who own/have the lease etc.					X	X				
		those who do not own/have the lease	X				X	X				

(a) Includes a variety of tenure such as people staying in boarding houses, supported accommodation (long term and short term) and renters on month to month leases.

(b) Note there will be lots of different situations some will lack control of space etc. but all will lack security of tenure.

\*\* An X for accommodation alternatives applies to **any** of the components of financial, personal, physical or psychological resources. If they do not exist the person's situation needs to be further considered in terms of the other elements on the table.

## Estimation Methodology (Appendix)

## APPENDIX 2 ESTIMATION METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

This Appendix presents an overview of the consistent, transparent and repeatable ABS methodology for estimating the number of people enumerated in the Census of Population and Housing who may be homeless on Census night. More information on the methodology can be found in the publication: **Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing** (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001).

The following ABS methodology has been applied to producing homelessness estimates from the 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses of Population and Housing.

This methodology will also be applied to future Censuses. However, improvements are expected to be made to both questions and field procedures which will provide for new and better estimates for tracking future changes in homelessness. The transparency and repeatability of the methodology will allow for an alternate estimate to be made that is consistent with 2011 to provide a link in monitoring change over time.

The income, mortgage and rent cut offs used in the rules for estimating homelessness are adjusted for each Census year. The cut offs for 2011 Census are discussed in detail in the Explanatory Notes.

### PERSONS IN IMPROVISED DWELLINGS, TENTS OR SLEEPING OUT

Estimating the homeless operational group 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out' commences by first considering the group of Australian residents who were enumerated in the Census in an 'improvised home, tent, sleepers out' and who reported either being at home on Census night or having 'no usual address'.

The Census does not directly collect any data on the ABS homelessness definitional element 'adequacy of the dwelling'. This methodology does not assume that the 'improvised dwelling...' category is a reasonable proxy, and both field and processing errors may overstate this group.

Nor does the Census currently directly collect information about accommodation alternatives, and proxy measures are needed to identify indicators of accommodation alternatives.

Neither the Census usual address question nor the dwelling category recorded by Census collectors is designed to measure homelessness (see Explanatory Notes for information about the purpose of the usual address question). Analysis of the reported characteristics of persons enumerated in dwellings classified by Census collectors as improvised home, tents, sleepers out, shows that many were unlikely to have been homeless.

There are a range of reasons why people may be in a dwelling classified as improvised by a Census collector, and which is reported as their usual address but who, however, are not likely to be homeless. In the 2006 Census, Census collector notes showed that some dwellings classified as improvised dwellings were new homes being progressively occupied, or reflected large numbers of construction staff living in site sheds ('improvised dwellings') as they built new suburbs, highways or similar construction tasks. Some of the records classified as improvised dwellings appeared to relate to owner builders living in a shed or

similar dwelling while building their home on their own property. The use of land, dwellings and property for these reasons is no different in 2011.

The ABS rules to classify as homeless people who were enumerated in improvised dwellings on Census night are presented in the table below. The rules aim to avoid misclassification of the majority of the construction workers or owner builders who would have accommodation alternatives. Failure to do so would result in homelessness estimates being driven by building booms (when homelessness would appear to rise) and downturns (when it would appear to fall), and present an odd occupational grouping of the homeless. During the Census in 2006 there was a boom in construction but between 2006 and 2011 Censuses the global financial crisis occurred and has reduced the levels of both construction workers accommodated away from home and owner builders living on their own property and building a home.

To approximate the concept of accommodation alternatives applied to this group, variables such as tenure, income, rent and mortgage payments are used.

***Rules for estimating Persons in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out***

The following table presents the rules that are applied to classify persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying in improvised dwellings, tents and sleepers out. The rules start with the broad Census dwelling category of 'improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out' and refines the category to avoid misclassifying as homeless those groups of people who were unlikely to be homeless on Census night.

# PERSONS WHO ARE IN IMPROVISED DWELLINGS, TENTS OR SLEEPERS OUT

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason	2011
1		All persons enumerated in an improvised home, tent, sleepers out		19,868
2	Minus	All persons who reported a usual address elsewhere in Australia and overseas visitors.	Australian holiday makers and international visitors - these people are not homeless	7,609
3	Equals	All persons enumerated in an improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out who reported being 'at home' or having 'no usual address'		12,259
4	Minus	All imputed records <sup>a</sup>	There is little evidence that all these people exist. For those that do, most would be removed using the other rules if the information were available. The imputed dwellings are most likely dwelling which are occupied on an intermittent basis where the occupants were enumerated (or even imputed) at their principal residence	698
5	Minus	Any person in a dwelling with a tenure type of owned outright, owned with a mortgage, being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, being rented, or being occupied under a life tenure scheme where at least one person was employed full-time <sup>b</sup>	People for whom the nature of their employment indicates that, on balance, their accommodation could be because of their employment e.g. construction workers, road workers; and others in their own dwelling	3,034
6	Minus	Any person in a dwelling with a tenure type of being occupied rent free, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure where at least one person was employed full-time, and the combined income of all persons in the dwelling was at least \$2,000/week <sup>c</sup>	People who, on balance, were mostly likely construction workers, road workers etc.	72
7	Minus	Any person who reported being 'at home' in a dwelling with a tenure type of owned outright where no one was employed full-time <sup>b</sup>	People who, on balance, were most likely owner builders / hobby farmers	1,449
8	Minus	Any person in a dwelling with a tenure type of owned with a mortgage with reported mortgage repayments of at least \$1,400/month where no one was employed full-time <sup>c</sup>	Remove those who, on balance, were most likely owner builders / hobby farmers	172
9	Minus	Any person in a dwelling with a tenure type of being rented with reported rental payments of at least \$400/week where no one was employed full-time <sup>c</sup>	People for whom the rental payments indicate they could rent elsewhere (have accommodation alternatives)	21
	Equals	<b>Those who are likely to be homeless</b>		<b>6,813</b>

<sup>a</sup>Imputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector

<sup>b</sup>The variables 'number of people employed' and 'combined income' do not include visitors who reported a usual address elsewhere. Therefore a person who is visiting the dwelling and who is employed full-time or has an income doesn't impact on the identification of other people in the dwelling as being homeless

<sup>c</sup> In 2006 the combined income cut off was \$2,000/week, the mortgage repayment cut off was \$1,050/month and the rental payment cut off was \$300/week. In 2001 the combined income cut off was \$1,594/week, the mortgage repayment cut off was \$845/month and the rental payment cut off was \$265/week.

As noted in the above table, imputed records have not been classified as representing homeless people. While no imputation is undertaken for rough sleepers, imputation is undertaken for an improvised dwelling which may have been occupied on Census night and about which the collector was not '**absolutely certain** was unoccupied' but for which no contact could be made. Detailed analysis was undertaken in 2006 supporting the treatment

of imputed records for this homeless operational group. Further information can be found in Feature Article 2: Methodology Used to Calculate Homeless Estimates in **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006** (cat. no. 2049.0).

For more information on analysis of this group see the ABS publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

## **PERSONS IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HOMELESS**

The ABS considers that the vetting process to allocate people to the short supply of accommodation supplied under the Specialist Homeless Services (SHS) program and its predecessor the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is unlikely to provide supported accommodation for those people who have accommodation alternatives, and that most supported accommodation does not provide the ABS definitional element 'security of tenure'.

To estimate the number of people in supported accommodation for the homeless on Census night in 2011 and 2006, ABS first included all persons in dwellings identified by the Census Area Supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified by the building owner / manager as 'hostels for the homeless, night shelter, refuge'. ABS then added people who were in dwellings flagged as being in supported accommodation using the Census 'list' and 'green sticker' strategies.

Imputed records are included in the estimates for this group because of the certainty of the nature of the dwellings flagged either by ABS staff, or by jurisdictions or services, and the irrelevance of the personal characteristics of occupants in ascertaining homelessness status for people staying in SAAP properties.

Some supported accommodation, such as some transitional housing, may not meet the ABS definition of homelessness because the tenants have security of tenure in the dwelling. In general, information in the Census cannot distinguish the transitional housing properties that have security of tenure. However, for the first time in the 2011 Census the ABS sought information to attempt to distinguish transitional housing management properties from other types of supported accommodation for the homeless. This information was incomplete and the ABS will pursue obtaining more complete information about security of tenure in future Censuses.

(To estimate the number of people in supported accommodation for the homeless on Census night in 2001, although the list and green sticker strategies were used, the data was not retained, and data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) collection on the number of clients and accompanying children accommodated on Census night were used. See Explanatory Notes for more information.)

### ***Rules for estimating Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless***

The following table presents the rules that are applied to classify persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying in supported accommodation for the homeless. The rules start with the Census non-private dwelling category of 'hostels for the homeless, night shelter, refuge' and adds persons who were in a dwelling flagged as being supported accommodation through the 'list' and 'green sticker' strategies.

## PERSONS IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS

### Estimating homelessness 2006 and beyond

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason	2011
1		All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'hostels for the homeless, night shelter, refuge' by a building owner / manager	Include people residing in non-private dwellings offering supported accommodation for the homeless on Census night	5,094
2	Plus	Any person in a dwelling flagged as being supported accommodation	Include people enumerated in private dwelling identified as being supported accommodation for the homeless	16,423
3	Minus	Any person identified above who reported being either an overseas visitor or an "owner, proprietor, staff and family"	Remove overseas visitors and 'owner, proprietor, staff and family' in supported accommodation	259
<b>Equals</b>		<b>Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless</b>		<b>21,258</b>

### Estimating homelessness 2001

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason
1		Counts of the number of clients and accompanying children accommodated on Census night 2001 from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Supported Accommodation Assistance Program collection for every state and territory except Victoria	Census data for persons in supported accommodation for the homeless identified through the list and green sticker strategies are not available
2	Plus	Persons accommodated in SAAP in Victoria from data from the AIHW SAAP collection and Department of Human Services (Victoria) for Victoria	AIHW SAAP data alone did not provide a full estimate of those in SAAP accommodation on Census night 2001.
<b>Equals</b>		<b>Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless</b>	

## PERSONS STAYING TEMPORARILY WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLDS

This group covers people for whom the elements of the ABS definition of homelessness that are lacking are 'security of tenure of the dwelling' and 'control, or access to social relations'. Visitors have no tenure. If they also, on balance, are most likely to lack accommodation alternatives then they are classified as homeless. Groups such as grey nomads, construction workers, recent migrants, other travellers are assumed, on balance, to have accommodation alternatives.

The homeless operational group 'Persons staying temporarily with other households' commences with the analysis of persons enumerated in any private dwelling structure (except an improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out) and who reported having 'No usual address'.

This group will contain people who were visiting on Census night for a range of reasons including those who are 'couch surfing'. It is unlikely that all of the people enumerated as



'visitors' without a usual address being reported on Census night meet the definition of homelessness.

People in private dwellings who report no usual address fall into two groups:

- visitors who report having no usual address and staying in a dwelling that also contains usual residents of that dwelling, and
- people staying in 'visitor only households' who report no usual address' and there are no usual residents in the dwelling.

Given the differences in the living circumstances on Census night of the two groups of people described above, each group needs to be considered using different judgements to determine whether the persons in the group are, on balance, likely to be homeless. Some of the people in 'visitor only households' will be families moving to a new location for work, people who have recently moved to, or returned to Australia and have not, or will not be living in their current property for six months or more in the Census year (given the Census takes place in August). In these circumstances they have correctly answered that they have no usual address, but they are not homeless.

Many other people in this visitor only household group were people travelling on Census night. Of these, the ABS classified one group as 'grey nomads' who were unlikely to be homeless and therefore were not included in the homeless population. Grey nomads are defined as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling reported no usual address, were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats on Census night.

Another group of people in 'visitor only households' were staying in properties (other than caravans, cabins or houseboats) where the property was owned outright or on which they reported mortgage repayments. They were not staying with friends or relatives. These people were not included in the homeless estimates as the judgement was made that they reported no usual address because they were either travelling or moving primary residence, and staying in their holiday or second home at the time of the Census.

Another group of people in visitor only households were staying in properties (other than caravans, cabins or houseboats) that they were renting. These people were not staying with friends or relatives and their characteristics suggested that they were travelling rather than being homeless on Census night.

The ABS also classified as not homeless people who were, on balance, most likely to be new migrants to Australia or returning to Australia to live. They were people who reported being overseas in August 2010, and who were renting or occupying premises on Census night and reported no usual address. For new migrants the year of arrival was 2011. On balance, most of the people within this group were unlikely to be homeless and had just not yet had the opportunity to settle in or back into Australia, or if they arrived in July or August would not be able to occupy their current address for six months in the year of the Census.

The ABS recognises that there are a number of groups that would be underrepresented in this homeless group of 'persons staying temporarily with other households'. These include youth, people fleeing domestic and / or family violence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who may be homeless but for whom a usual address on Census night is reported. They cannot be separated from those people who were visitors on Census night (such as those on family holidays, visiting relatives etc.). This 'invisibility', for some, of the homeless condition in the Census dataset should be taken into consideration when using the data for this group.

ABS has not yet been able to implement any reliable way of estimating homelessness among youth staying with other households and for whom a usual address is reported in the Census. Service providers and researchers indicate that the low estimates of homeless youth staying with other households does not concord with their knowledge about youth homelessness. Guided by its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, the ABS is continuing to undertake research and development to improve the estimation of homelessness, including youth homelessness. In particular, the ABS has been undertaking a quality study to inform the potential development of a nationally representative homeless school students survey.

Imputed records have not been classified as representing homeless people based on analysis of 2006 data. See Feature Article 2: Methodology Used to Calculate Homeless Estimates in **Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006** (cat. no. 2049.0).

More analysis on these groups can be found in the previous ABS publications: **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) and **Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, August 2011** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.002).

### ***Rules for estimating Persons staying temporarily with other households***

The following table presents the rules that are applied to classify the persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying temporarily with other households. The rule starts with the broad Census dwelling category of persons enumerated in a private dwelling (which was not classified as an improvised dwelling, tents, sleepers out) and who reported no usual address. The category is then refined for those groups of people who were unlikely to be homeless on Census night among two broad groupings:

- visitors who report having no usual address and staying in a dwelling that also contains usual residents of that dwelling, and
- people staying in 'visitor only households' who report 'no usual address' and there are no usual residents in the dwelling.

## PERSONS STAYING TEMPORARILY WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLDS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason	2011
1		All persons enumerated in a private dwelling which was not classified as an improvised home, tent, sleepers out who reported 'no usual address'		32,729
2	Minus	Any person who was in a dwelling where all persons in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, reported 'no usual address', were not in the labour force, and were staying in a 'caravan, cabin, or houseboat'	Persons who on balance, would most likely to be 'grey nomads' and who were travelling and would have accommodation alternatives	2,971
3	Minus	Any person in a 'visitor only' household staying in a caravan, cabin or houseboat (except for persons in a 'caravan/residential park or camping ground' who report a tenure of being 'occupied rent free' or a tenure type of 'being rented' but not stating their weekly rent payments)	Persons who on balance, would be most likely to be travelling except those who appear to be clients of supported accommodation services who were referred to caravan parks	3,783
4	Minus	Any person in a 'visitor only' household that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.' and which was owned either outright or with a mortgage, or being rented	Persons who, on balance, were most likely to be moving frequently for employment reasons, staying in their second dwelling or who have moved after retirement etc.	6,022
5	Minus	Any person who was born overseas, first arrived in Australia in the Census calendar year and wasn't born in one of the top ten countries for humanitarian settlers in Australia <sup>a</sup>	Persons who, on balance, were most likely to be recent migrants to Australia who at the time of the Census have not had time to choose their home and report a usual residence according to Census definitions	686
6	Minus	Any person who was born in Australia and reported being overseas the year before the Census	Australians who, on balance, were most likely to be recently returning residents and who at the time of the Census have not had time to choose their home and report a usual residence according to Census definitions	519
7	Minus	All imputed records <sup>b</sup>	There is little evidence that these people even exist, in addition the 'no usual address' status has been imputed. Removes double counting for some 'visitor only' dwellings which were in holiday areas and may have appeared occupied when in fact they were not	1,085
8	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational group 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' <sup>c</sup>	These people are already counted as homeless in the previous homeless operational groups, this step removes double counting	294
<b>Equals</b>		<b>Those who are likely to be homeless</b>		<b>17,369</b>

<sup>a</sup>The top ten countries for humanitarian settlers are sourced from the list of 'humanitarian settler arrivals by birth place' in the 'Immigration Update' publication by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. They are for the financial year ending July of the Census year.

<sup>b</sup>Imputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector.

<sup>c</sup>In 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not use for supported accommodation in 2001.

## PERSONS IN BOARDING HOUSES

The element of the ABS definition of homelessness that people in boarding houses are assumed to lack is 'control of, and access to social relations', and their staying in boarding

houses is assumed to reflect a lack of accommodation alternatives which together indicate homelessness. Note that halls of residence for students, dwellings for members of religious orders and institutions such as hospitals are not boarding houses for homeless people.

The homeless operational group 'Persons in boarding houses' commences with analysis of persons enumerated in non-private dwellings that were classified by their owners / managers as 'boarding houses, private hotel'. It is expected that in most cases these boarding houses etc. have been correctly classified by the owner / manager. However, because the Census boarding house category is not designed to approximate homelessness, it will include some student halls of residence that are not part of any one school but serve multiple schools in a region. Rules are used to exclude from homelessness estimates those dwellings that, on balance, appear to be more likely to be a student hall of residence.

The rules also aim to reclassify other non-private dwellings as boarding houses where the characteristics of the people in the dwelling suggest that they may be housing large numbers of homeless people and can be assumed, on balance, to be more likely to be a boarding house although they were classified by the owner / manager as 'staff quarters', 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' or as a dwelling type that was not classifiable, or a classification was not stated.

The rules also attempt to reclassify any dwellings that were identified by Area Supervisors and Census collectors as private dwellings but the characteristics of the occupants are such that, on balance, they are more likely to be a boarding house rather than a large (apparently) unrelated group household. If a dwelling is a private dwelling, but operates illegally on the basis of multiple room by room tenancies, the Area Supervisor and collector may enumerate it according to its legal presentation rather than on the basis of its unobserved operation as a boarding house. The rules are applied to identify these dwelling amongst large (apparently) unrelated group households. However, this method is limited and is likely to overestimate the number of large (apparently) group households as boarding houses due to the limitations of the Census in capturing all relationships in the household. The Census only captures the relationships to the first person on the household form (and child relationships to person 2), so if people in the household are in couple relationships but neither of the couple is reported as person 1, then such households with five or more usual residents may be incorrectly classified as group households rather than the family household it really is. That same household may then also be incorrectly assumed to be a boarding house and its residents classified as homeless. The correct classification of households as family households can also be affected when there are persons who were temporarily absent (PTAs) on Census night.

Rules are applied to these large (apparently) unrelated group households to ensure that, on balance, households such as student households, retirement villages, nursing homes, homes for the disabled, convents / monasteries and other religious institutions are not incorrectly reclassified as boarding houses for the homeless.

For private dwellings additional steps ensure that dwellings are only counted as housing people in boarding houses when the characteristics of the dwelling and the people residing in them corroborate with a boarding house situation.

From 2006, additional information available from the Census about need for assistance with core activities and volunteering is used to refine the rules to assist with ensuring the best possible reclassification of private dwellings as boarding houses. The aim of using these variables is to correctly classify dwellings that were more likely to be convents or monasteries (and other similar religious institutions) as well as for dwellings more likely to be facilities for the aged. The necessary items for this classification refinement were not

collected in the 2001 Census. The rules for 2001 therefore omit these steps which refine the classification of boarding houses.

To determine, on balance, that the dwelling is most likely to have been a boarding house for homeless people, variables such as labour force status, student status, income, tenure type, need for assistance with core activities, religion and volunteering are used. These are shown in more detail in the table below. All of the variables such as income are applied to the individual in private dwellings rather than considering the household income, because if they are in boarding houses, individuals would not be sharing their economic resources.

Additional steps have been applied in 2011 to include people in dwellings to be classified as boarding houses based on a new list process.

It is not known whether the small number of additional boarding house residents classified through the extended list strategy offsets the smaller number of non private dwellings likely classified as boarding houses by Census Area Supervisors in 2011, or whether such an extended list might have increased the estimates if it had also been used in 2006.

### ***Rules for estimating Persons in boarding houses***

The following table presents the rules that are applied to classify persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying in boarding houses. The rules start with all persons enumerated in dwellings that were classified as 'boarding house, private hotel'. Then additional rules are applied to remove dwellings that are student halls of residences. Rules are applied to 'staff quarters' to pick up any that, on balance, were more likely to be boarding houses. Rules are also applied to 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' and 'other and not classifiable' or 'not stated' dwellings to identify if, on balance, they were more likely to be boarding houses. Finally rules are applied to private dwellings which appear to be large unrelated group households to determine if, on balance, they are more likely to be boarding houses.

# PERSONS STAYING IN BOARDING HOUSES

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason	2011
1		All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'boarding house, private hotel', where the person reported a residential status of 'Guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or 'Not stated' and reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' on Census night and where less than 60% of identified people in that dwelling reported a weekly income of \$600 or more <sup>a</sup>	Boarding house residents who were not staff/owners/managers etc. or who reported a usual address elsewhere. Overseas visitors are also not considered	13,482
2	Plus	All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'boarding house, private hotel' who reported a residential status of 'Guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or 'Not stated' and reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' on Census night and where less than 60% of identified people in that dwelling reported a labour force status of 'employed'	As above	48
3	Minus	Persons in steps 1 and 2 above where at least 60% of identified people in that dwelling reported a student status of 'Full-time student'	Remove from the above dwellings that, on balance, were most likely to be student halls of residence	1,796
4	Plus	All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'staff quarters' where at least 60% of people in that dwelling reported a weekly income of less than \$600 a week and less than 60% of people in that dwelling reported a labour force status of 'employed' <sup>a</sup>	Identify those dwellings which were classified as staff quarters which may, with further consideration, on balance, be boarding houses	346
5	Minus	Persons in step 4 where at least 60% of people in that dwelling reported a student status of 'Full-time student'	Remove from the above dwellings that, on balance, were most likely to be student halls of residence	111
6	Minus	Persons in step 4 who reported a residential status of 'Owner, proprietor, staff, and family'	Remove persons who were owners / managers staff or family	31
7	Minus	Persons in step 4 who were overseas visitors	Remove overseas visitors	0
8	Plus	All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' in a dwelling where at least 75% of people in that dwelling reported a	Identify those dwellings which were classified as 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' which may, with further consideration, on balance be boarding houses	516

		weekly income of less than \$600 a week and at least 75% of people in that dwelling reported a labour force status of 'unemployed' or 'Not in the labour force' and at least 20% of people in that dwelling reported being 'At home'²		
9	Minus	Persons in step 8 where more than 25% of people in that dwelling reported a student status of 'Full-time student'	Remove from the above dwellings that, on balance, were most likely to be student halls of residence	18
10	Minus	Persons in steps 8 who reported a residential status of 'Owner, proprietor, staff, and family'	Remove persons who were owners / managers staff or family	11
11	Minus	Persons in steps 8 who were overseas visitors	Remove overseas visitors	0
12	Plus	<p>All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'Other and not classifiable' or 'Not stated', where the person reported a residential status of 'Guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or 'Not stated' in a dwelling and where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>less than 90% of identified people in that dwelling reported being under 20 years of age and who reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' AND</li> <li>less than 85% of identified people who also attended a 'stated' type of educational institution or didn't attend an educational institution in that dwelling reported attending any type of educational institution and who reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' AND</li> <li>less than 90% of identified people in that dwelling reported a 'stated' religious belief and who reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' AND</li> <li>less than 50% of identified people in that dwelling reported a labour force status of 'employed' and who reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' AND</li> <li>less than 85% of identified people in that dwelling reported being 65 years of age or over and who reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address'</li> </ul>	<p>Add people who, on balance, were more likely to be homeless in other non private dwellings who aren't in what are presumed to be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>correctional institutions for children,</li> <li>boarding schools, residential colleges and halls of residence</li> <li>convents, monasteries and other religious institutions</li> <li>hotels, motels and staff quarters because the majority of their adult residents are employed</li> <li>retirement villages and nursing homes</li> </ul>	3,535



13	Plus	All persons enumerated in a private dwelling which was classified as a group household, where the dwelling had at least four bedrooms or the number of bedrooms was 'Not stated' and the dwelling had at least five 'usual residents' where, for people reporting being at home, less than 60% of those people reported a weekly income of \$600 or more and less than 60% reported a labour force status of 'employed' and less than 60% reported either attending any type of educational institution (above 'primary' level) or a labour force status of 'Employed, worked full-time' and less than 60% reported a need for assistance of 'Has a need for assistance with core activities' <sup>abc</sup>	Identify private dwellings identified in the Census as group houses	4,191
14	Minus	Persons in step 13 in a dwelling with a landlord type of 'Real estate agent', 'State or territory housing authority', 'Person not in the same household-parent/other relative', or 'Employer-Government (includes Defence Housing Authority)'	Remove 'group houses' identified in step 13 above which have a landlord type which indicates they are rented privately, rented from a state/territory housing authority or employer sponsored housing (e.g. staff quarters), as on balance, they were not likely to be boarding houses	820
15	Minus	Persons in step 13 in a dwelling with a tenure type of 'Fully owned', 'Owned with a mortgage', or 'Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme'	Remove 'group houses' identified in step 13 above which have a tenure type which indicates they are on balance, most likely to be privately owned multi family households	912
16	Minus	Persons in step 13 in a dwelling located in a 'Caravan/residential park or camping ground', 'Marina', 'Manufactured home estate', or 'Retirement village (self-contained)'	Remove dwellings in locations such as retirement villages which are on balance were unlikely to be the site of a boarding house	44
17	Minus	Persons in step 13 in a dwelling that was a 'Caravan, cabin, houseboat'	Remove small dwellings such as caravans which, on balance were unlikely to be boarding houses	0
18	Minus	Persons in step 13 where at least 60% of the people who reported being 'At home' in that dwelling reported either a student status of 'Full-time student', 'Part-time student', or a labour force status of 'Employed, worked full-time' <sup>b</sup>	Remove dwellings that, on balance, were most likely to be student halls of residence, student households or group houses with the majority of occupants employed full time and unlikely to house homeless people	139
19	Minus	Persons in step 13 where there are less than three persons enumerated in the dwelling	Remove all dwellings where there is not enough information about all the usual residents to conclude that the dwelling is likely to be a boarding house	15



20	Minus	Persons in step 13 where every person in that dwelling reported a voluntary work status of 'Volunteer' <sup>c</sup>	Remove groups of people in households, who on balance, were most likely to be housed together and who volunteer their time (for example church groups who house people who work in the community sector assisting those with disabilities and volunteer their expertise)	36
21	Minus	Persons in step 13 where at least 90% of people in that dwelling reported a 'stated' religious belief	Remove those households who on balance were most likely to be in religious institutions, such as convents	494
22	Minus	Persons in step 13 where every person in that dwelling reported either a usual address five years ago of 'Overseas in 2001' or 'Not stated', or was an 'Overseas visitor 2006' and at least one person in that dwelling reported either a usual address five years ago of 'Overseas in 2001' or was an 'Overseas visitor 2006'	Remove overseas visitors	245
23	Minus	Persons in step 13 where every person in that dwelling didn't state their weekly income, labour force status, type of educational institution, need for assistance, and the number of bedrooms in the dwelling	Remove dwellings where there is not enough information about the occupants to conclude that the dwelling is likely to be a boarding house	455

#### Additional steps Estimating homelessness 2011 and beyond

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason	2011
24	Plus	All persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'boarding house, private hotel' or 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' or 'staff quarters' or 'hostels for the homeless, night shelter, refuge' where the person reported a residential status of 'Guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or 'Not stated' and reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' on Census night and the dwelling was identified through the boarding house list strategy	Including people in non-private dwellings who were identified through the boarding house list strategy	3,903
25	Minus	All persons who were considered homeless in steps 1-23 who were also in non-private dwellings	To remove overlap with persons already considered homeless in the boarding house category	3,290
26	Equals	Additional persons identified through the boarding house list strategy who were enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'boarding house, private hotel' or 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' or 'staff		613

		quarters' or 'hostels for the homeless, night shelter, refuge' where the person reported a residential status of 'Guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or 'Not stated' and reported being 'At home' or having 'no usual address' on Census night		
27	Minus	Persons in step 26 enumerated in dwellings in NSW, WA, NT and ACT	Lists identifying boarding houses were only received from Vic, Qld, SA and Tas.	4
28	Minus	Persons in step 26 in dwellings where only one person was enumerated on Census night	Dwellings housing only one person are unlikely to be boarding houses	0
29	Plus	All persons enumerated in a private dwelling which was a separate house or a semi-detached, row or terrace house, or townhouse etc, who were 'At home' or reported having 'no usual address' which were identified through the boarding house list strategy	Counting people in private dwellings who were identified through the boarding house list strategy	2,768
30	Minus	All persons who were already classified as homeless and in boarding houses in steps 1-23.	To remove overlap with persons already considered homeless in the boarding house category	119
31	Equals	Additional persons identified through the boarding house list strategy who were enumerated in a private dwelling which was a separate house or a semi-detached, row or terrace house, or townhouse etc., who were 'At home' or reported having 'no usual address'		2,649
32	Minus	Persons in dwellings in step 31 which housed one and multiple family households and lone person households.	Remove dwellings which house families because the dwellings are unlikely to be boarding houses	1,049
33	Minus	Persons in step 31 in dwellings with tenure type of fully owned, owned with a mortgage, being purchased under a rent buy scheme, or, being occupied rent free or under a life tenure scheme	Dwellings which are owned, being purchased under a rent buy scheme or occupied under a life tenure scheme are unlikely to be boarding houses	162
34	Minus	Persons in step 31 in dwellings with landlord type of employer (including government employer – (includes defence housing authority)) or 'State and territory housing authority' or 'Housing co-operative/community/church group'	Dwellings provided by employers or administered by state and territory housing authorities are unlikely to be boarding houses	95
35	Minus	Persons in dwellings in step 31 where more than 60% of persons who reported being 'at home' reported the same address on Census night as one year ago and five years ago	Dwellings where the majority of persons are housed in the same dwelling for 5 years are unlikely to be boarding houses	31
36	Minus	Persons in dwellings in step 31 with less than 5 usual residents	Remove dwellings where there were less than 5 usual residents as they are unlikely to be boarding houses	527

37	Minus	Persons in step 31 in dwellings where only one person was enumerated on Census night	Dwellings housing one person are unlikely to be boarding houses	19
38	Minus	All imputed records <sup>d</sup>		353
39 <sup>e</sup>	Minus	All persons who were already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out', 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' and 'Persons staying temporarily with other households' <sup>e</sup>	These people are already counted as homeless in the previous homeless operational groups, this step removes double counting	292
<b>Equals Those who are likely to be homeless<sup>d</sup></b>				<b>17,721</b>

<sup>a</sup>In 2006 the income cut off was \$600/week, in 2001 it was \$400/week.

<sup>b</sup>The variables 'number of people employed', 'student status (full or part time)' does not include visitors who reported a usual address elsewhere. For example a person who is visiting the dwelling and who is employed full-time doesn't impact on the identification of other people in the dwelling as being homeless

<sup>c</sup>Steps 13 and 20 could not be applied in 2001 as information about need for assistance and voluntary work was not collected.

<sup>d</sup>Imputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector are only explicitly excluded from the data obtained in 2011 through the boarding house list strategy. Imputed records are not flagged for non-private dwellings. For the other private dwelling components of this methodology imputed records do not need to be explicitly removed because the rules to reclassify private dwellings as boarding houses exclude any not stated responses to the variables used.

Imputed records have not stated to the variables used therefore they are excluded.

<sup>e</sup>Step 39, removing overlap between this and other operational groups, was also applied in 2006. In 2001 the step was not applied between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not used for supported accommodation in 2001 and no overlap can be determined.

## PERSONS STAYING IN OTHER TEMPORARY LODGING

The homeless operational group 'Persons staying in other temporary lodging includes people who reported having 'no usual address' on Census night who were enumerated in non-private dwellings which were classified by the Census Area Supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and also classified by the building owner / manager as 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast'. People staying in other temporary lodgings who have no usual address lack the ABS homelessness definition element of 'security of tenure of the dwelling'. The rules then consider the income and employment status of these people to determine whether they could be considered to be homeless based on a lack of accommodation alternatives.

### ***Rules for estimating Persons staying in other temporary lodging***

The following table presents the rules that are applied to classify the persons who were most likely to be homeless on Census night and staying in other temporary lodgings. The rules start with the persons enumerated in the non-private dwelling category of 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' who reported no usual address and is refined to remove people who were, on balance, unlikely to be homeless on Census night.

## PERSONS IN OTHER TEMPORARY LODGING

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason	2011
1		Persons enumerated in dwellings identified by the Census Area supervisors and collectors as non-private dwellings and classified as 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast', who were not previously identified as being homeless, who reported having 'no usual address' on Census night and reported a weekly income of less than \$400 per week and reported a labour force status of 'unemployed' or 'Not in the labour force' <sup>a</sup>	Persons in dwellings which were classified as 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' who, on balance, were most likely to be homeless	730
2	Minus	All persons who reported a student status of 'Full-time student'	Students who, on balance, were unlikely to be homeless	37
3	Minus	All persons who reported a residential status of 'Owner, proprietor, staff, and family'	Persons who were owners / managers staff or family	7
4	Minus	All persons who were overseas visitors	Remove overseas visitors	0
	<b>Equals</b>	<b>Those who are likely to be homeless<sup>b</sup></b>		<b>686</b>

<sup>a</sup> In 2006 the weekly income cut off was \$400/week. In 2001 the weekly income cut off was \$300/week.

<sup>b</sup> There is no overlap between this and any other group because the assumptions upon which it is based are mutually exclusive to the other groups.

## PERSONS LIVING IN 'SEVERELY' CROWDED DWELLINGS

People in severely crowded dwellings are considered to lack the 'control of, and access to social relations' element of the ABS definition of homelessness. Lack of accommodation alternatives is assumed for people living as usual residents in a severely crowded dwelling. The judgement is that people who had accommodation alternatives would not remain in such severely crowded circumstances.

The homeless operational group 'Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings' is operationalised as those usual residents of a private dwelling that, according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS), requires four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the usual residents.

The concept of crowding is based upon a comparison of the number of bedrooms in a dwelling with a series of household demographics such as the number of usual residents, their relationship to one another, their age and their sex.

There is no single standard or measure for housing utilisation, however the CNOS is widely used internationally and the ABS uses it for its measures of crowding for other purposes. It is a suitable standard for use with Census data because all of the required variables for its calculation are available from the Census, although family coding limits the suitability of it in large complex family households, and where persons may be temporarily absent on Census night.

The CNOS is sensitive to both household size and composition. The measure assesses the bedroom requirements of a household by specifying that:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom,
- children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom,
- children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom,
- single household members 18 and over should have a separate bedroom, as should

- parents or couples, and
- a lone person household may reasonably occupy a bed sitter.

Households living in dwellings where this standard cannot be met are considered to be overcrowded.

There may be some underestimation associated with the application of the CNOS to Census data. It is not possible to create a CNOS estimate of the number of extra bedrooms needed for households where any key piece of information is missing. This includes the number of persons per dwelling, age of the persons, the relationship in household, in some cases, where at least one person (who is not the spouse of person 1) is temporarily absent on Census night. In addition, there may be cases where usual residents are not recorded on the Census form due to fear by the residents that they may be found to have more residents living in the dwelling than are allowed by their lease agreement.

Treating overcrowding as homelessness at this severe level of lacking four or more extra bedrooms is designed to prevent the misclassification of people as homeless who may choose to live together under some crowding to save money, to be close to family, or for other reasons etc.. In addition, it also takes account of the limitation of the Census household form which only seeks relationship information within the household in relation to 'person 1', as well as child relationships to 'person 2'. This limitation of Census family coding results in misclassification of family relationships, particularly for large households with complex family relationships or households which contain multiple families, or where persons are temporarily absent. Households that look like crowded group households in the Census may actually include a number of couples. Under the CNOS a single adult requires their own bedroom but a couple can share a bedroom, and the masking of relationships can inflate the crowding measure.

The boundary of four or more extra bedrooms required in the Census data aligns with the concept of extreme or severe crowding, and aligns reasonably well with results from ABS Indigenous surveys, and avoids overestimation from Census data at lower thresholds due to family coding, persons temporarily absent and potential errors in the numbers of bedrooms being reported.

Other Census variables are not applied to imply accommodation alternatives in severely crowded dwellings. While some of the residents may own the dwelling in which they live in severely crowded conditions, the presence of other people that contribute to crowding demonstrates loss of the power to exercise control and choice in this living situation.

### ***Rules for estimating Persons living in severely crowded dwellings***

The following table presents the rules that are applied to classify the persons who were, on balance, most likely to be homeless on Census night and live in severely crowded dwellings. The rule starts with the persons enumerated in private dwellings where the dwelling would require four or more extra bedrooms under the CNOS and then refines the group by removing people who have already been considered as homeless in the other homeless groups.



## PERSONS LIVING IN 'SEVERELY' CROWDED DWELLINGS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create homeless estimates	Reason	2011
1		All persons enumerated in a private dwelling who were usual residents in dwellings which needed 4 or more extra bedrooms under the Canadian National Occupancy Standard <sup>a</sup>		41,614
2	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out', 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless', 'Persons staying temporarily with other households', 'Persons staying in boarding houses' <sup>b</sup>	These people are already counted as homeless in the previous homeless operational groups, this step removes double counting	224
	<b>Equals</b>	<b>Those who are likely to be homeless</b>		<b>41,390</b>

<sup>a</sup>See Explanatory notes for more information.

<sup>b</sup>In 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not use for supported accommodation in 2001.

## OTHER MARGINAL HOUSING GROUPS

The ABS present, alongside the homeless estimates from the Census, estimates of the number of people in selected marginal housing circumstances. These are limited to categories that can be obtained from the Census. Other marginal housing, such as housing with major structural problems or where residents are in constant threat of violence, cannot be obtained from the Census and are therefore not included.

These marginal housing groups not only provide an indication of the numbers of people living in marginal housing close to the boundary of homelessness, but can also provide a possible indication of people who may be at risk of homelessness.

Three marginal housing groups are classified from the Census:

- persons living in other crowded dwellings that are not in 'severely' crowded dwellings,
- persons living in other improvised dwellings - that is those who were living in improvised dwellings but were not considered homeless under the rules for the group 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out', and
- persons marginally housed in caravan parks.

Each of these groups are discussed below.

## PERSONS LIVING IN OTHER CROWDED DWELLINGS

Persons living in other crowded dwellings are those usual residents living in dwellings reported in the Census where the dwelling requires three extra bedrooms to accommodate them according to the CNOS (see Glossary and the above section for more details on 'Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings'). Under the operationalisation of the ABS definition they are not classified as homeless but are considered to be in marginal housing and may be at risk of homelessness.

Rules for estimating Persons living in other crowded dwellings

The following table outlines the rules used to estimate the number of persons living in other

crowded dwellings and ensures that no person who has already been counted as homeless is also counted in this marginal housing category.

#### PERSONS LIVING IN OTHER CROWDED DWELLINGS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create estimates of the marginally housed	Reason	2011
1		All persons enumerated in a private dwelling who were usual residents in dwellings which needed 3 extra bedrooms under the Canadian National Occupancy Standard <sup>a</sup>		61,054
2	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out', 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless', 'Persons staying temporarily with other households', 'Persons staying in boarding houses' and 'Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings' <sup>b</sup>	These people are already counted as homeless	179
	<b>Equals</b>	<b>Those who are likely to be marginally housed</b>		<b>60,875</b>

<sup>a</sup>See Explanatory notes for more information.

<sup>b</sup>In 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not use for supported accommodation in 2001.

#### PERSONS IN OTHER IMPROVISED DWELLINGS

Persons in other improvised dwellings are those people who were enumerated on Census night in the dwelling category of an improvised home, tent, sleepers out who reported either being 'at home' on Census night or having no usual address, and are not considered, on balance, to be homeless (see above on 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out'). Under the ABS definition they are not classified as homeless because they have accommodation alternatives, in many living situations, the dwelling will be adequate. They are, however, included in marginal housing and may be at risk of homelessness.

Rules for estimating Persons in other improvised dwellings

The following table outlines the rules used to estimate the number of persons living in other improvised dwellings and ensures that no person who has already been counted as homeless or in other crowded dwellings is also counted in this marginal housing category.

## PERSONS IN OTHER IMPROVISED DWELLINGS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create estimates of the marginally housed	Reason	2011
1		All persons enumerated in an improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out who reported being 'at home' or having 'no usual address'		12,259
2	Minus	Persons already considered to be homeless in the homeless operational group 'Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out'	These people are classified as homeless	6,813
3	Minus	All imputed records <sup>b</sup>	There is little evidence that these people even exist or that they were not in the dwellings to which they were imputed (which are occupied on a semi-permanent basis) and the occupants were instead either enumerated in their principal residence or imputed at that residence	698
4	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless', 'Persons staying in boarding houses' and 'Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings'; and the marginally housed group 'Persons living in other crowded dwellings' <sup>a</sup>	These people are classified as homeless	244
<b>Equals</b>		<b>Those who are likely to be marginally housed</b>		<b>4,504</b>

<sup>a</sup>In 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not use for supported accommodation in 2001.

<sup>b</sup>Imputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector.

## PERSONS marginally HOUSED IN CARAVAN PARKS

Persons marginally housed in caravan parks are those considered to be in marginal housing and at risk of homelessness. However, not all persons living in caravan parks are considered to be marginally housed. For example, those living in cabins will have access to their own kitchen facilities and bathroom. However, the Census data do not allow caravans and cabins to be separately identified. Others living in caravan parks on a long-term basis have an element of security of tenure, and for some people they have chosen to reside in a caravan park due to convenience, cost or location and could select other accommodation alternatives.

Persons marginally housed in caravan parks are operationalised as those people who were enumerated on Census night:

- in caravan, cabin or houseboat in a caravan / residential park or camping ground,
- reported being at home on Census night,
- where no usual resident reported working full-time,
- the dwelling was being rented for less than \$400 per week,
- the landlord was not an employer,
- the dwelling was reported as having less than 3 bedrooms, and
- the combined income of the usual residents in the dwelling was less than \$2,000 per week.



Rules for estimating Persons marginally housed in caravan parks

The following table outlines the rules used to estimate the number of persons marginally housed in caravan parks and ensures that no person has already been counted as homeless or in other crowded dwellings is also counted in this marginal housing category.

## PERSONS WHO ARE marginally HOUSED IN CARAVAN PARKS

Step	Minus / Plus	Steps taken to create estimates of the marginally housed	Reason	2011
1		All persons enumerated in a caravan, cabin or houseboat in a caravan/residential park or camping ground who reported being 'at home' on Census night.		54,685
2	Minus	All persons in dwellings with a tenure type of owned outright, owned with a mortgage, being purchased under a rent/buy scheme or occupied under a life tenure scheme		30,192
3	Minus	All persons in a dwelling where at least one usual resident reported working full time <sup>a</sup>	People who it could be reasonably assumed have accommodation alternatives	6,751
4	Minus	All imputed records <sup>b</sup>	There is little evidence that these people even exist or that they were not in the dwellings to which they were imputed (which are occupied on a semi-permanent basis) and the occupants were instead either enumerated in their principal residence or imputed at that residence	3,238
5	Minus	All persons in a dwelling with a tenure type of being rented with reported rental payments of at least \$400/week <sup>c</sup>	Those people for whom the rental payments indicate they could, on balance, rent elsewhere (i.e. they have accommodation alternatives)	380
6	Minus	All persons in a dwelling with a landlord type of employer, includes government employer (includes Defence Housing Authority)	Persons for whom their accommodation is, on balance most likely to be related to their employment	172
7	Minus	All persons in dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms	People who are, on balance, most likely to be living in cabins	626
8	Minus	All persons in dwellings where the combined income was at least \$2000 a week <sup>ac</sup>	People for whom their combined income indicates they could, on balance reside elsewhere (i.e. they have accommodation alternatives)	184
9	Minus	Any person who was already considered homeless in homeless operational groups 'Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless', 'Persons staying temporarily with other households' and 'Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings'; and the marginally housed group 'Persons living in other crowded dwellings' <sup>d</sup>	These people are classified as homeless	179
	<b>Equals</b>	<b>Those who are likely to be marginally housed in caravan parks</b>		<b>12,963</b>

<sup>a</sup>The variables 'number of people employed' and 'combined income' do not include visitors who reported a usual address elsewhere. Therefore a person who is visiting the dwelling and who is employed full-time or has an income doesn't impact on the identification of other people in the dwelling as being marginally housed.

<sup>b</sup>Imputed records where no form and no count was obtained by the collector and where no form but a count was obtained by the collector.

<sup>c</sup> In 2006 the combined income cut off was \$2,000/week and the rental payment cut off was \$300/week. In 2001 the combined income cut off was \$1,594/week and the rental payment cut off was \$265/week.

<sup>d</sup>In 2001 no overlap can be determined between this and the homeless operational group 'persons in supported accommodation for the homeless' because Census data was not use for supported accommodation in 2001.

## 2011 Census Procedures (Appendix)

## APPENDIX 3 2011 CENSUS PROCEDURES

### INTRODUCTION

The Census of Population and Housing aims to count everyone in Australia on Census night. A number of procedures and special enumeration strategies are used together to maximise the overall enumeration of the Australian population. The enumeration strategies relevant to homelessness estimation are the Homelessness Enumeration Strategy and the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy. For more information see **Information Paper: 2011 Census Special Enumeration Strategies** (cat no. 2911.0.55.004).

The key procedures and strategies implemented in the 2011 Census relevant to the estimation of homelessness included:

- improvements to the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy,
- over twice as many specialist field staff were employed to conduct the homeless count in 2011 than in 2006 (over 550 staff in 2011 compared with over 250 in 2006), and
- more comprehensive review of the quality of coding of household forms for dwelling structures initially coded by Census collectors as 'improvised home, tent, sleepers out'.

ABS also sought additional lists from jurisdictions and homelessness services to support the separate classification of transitional housing within supported accommodation for people who are homeless, and to assist in the classification of boarding houses likely to accommodate people who are homeless.

### Homelessness Enumeration Strategy

The Homelessness Enumeration Strategy is a nation-wide initiative designed to complement the mainstream Census and other special strategies to maximise the overall enumeration of the homeless population. It targets the enumeration of rough sleepers, couch surfers and persons in supported accommodation for the homeless.

#### *Rough sleepers*

The approach for counting rough sleepers was to focus on 'hot spots', using information received from service providers. ABS then worked closely with service and accommodation providers in awareness raising and local engagement in those areas, and recruited 550 specialist field staff to help count people sleeping rough.

As in 2006, a collection period of one week spanning Census night was used to cover the various 'hot spot' locations. The use of Special collectors, and particularly staff recruited from homelessness services, is designed to not only use their expertise to locate people sleeping rough, but also to ensure that the information collected relates only to those people sleeping rough on Census night (with no likelihood that they were enumerated elsewhere) and that they are not enumerated more than once in the 'hot spot' locations.

In 2011, the Special Short Form used in 2006 was again generally used to enumerate rough sleepers. However, to account for the different context of people sleeping rough in Northern Australia (including the Northern Territory and northern parts of Western Australia and Queensland) the mainstream household form was also used which captures more comprehensive information for groups of people sleeping rough (such as the Darwin 'long-grassers').

## ***Couch surfers***

In 2011, the identification of 'couch surfers' on mainstream forms was given greater emphasis than in previous Censuses. ABS ran a targeted promotion campaign, through agencies such as Anglicare and the Salvation Army, to encourage people who were homeless to write 'None' in response to the usual address question on the Census form to indicate clearly that they had no usual address.

## ***Supported accommodation for the homeless***

As in previous Censuses, the ABS again used both a 'list' strategy and a 'green sticker' strategy to support ABS classification of dwellings that were supported accommodation for the homeless.

ABS obtained lists of addresses of supported accommodation from government bodies, individual Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) providers and umbrella homelessness services organisations. In 2011 ABS also sought information about what type of supported accommodation was provided i.e. whether it was crisis or transitional housing etc. Some of the lists ABS received included this extra detail, some did not.

Green stickers were sent to relevant organisations to distribute to dwellings such as refuges that were not on the address lists sent to the ABS. The green stickers were placed on the Census forms completed in those dwellings and mailed back to ABS, minimising contact with the local Census collector and maintaining both the confidentiality of the nature of the dwellings and the privacy of the people in those dwellings on Census night. On receipt of mail back (whether green stickered or not) collectors are advised that the form had been returned by post and not to return to the dwelling.

## ***Boarding houses***

New lists of boarding houses (both registered and illegal boarding house operations) were sought from jurisdictions and homelessness service providers in 2011 and were received from Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland. It is unlikely that these lists covered all boarding houses in those states.

## **Indigenous Enumeration Strategy**

In 2011, the Homeless Enumeration Strategy was implemented in conjunction with other Census special enumeration strategies, particularly the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy, to target culturally appropriate strategies at nominated discrete Indigenous communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in urban and rural areas. There was also a coordinated northern Australia enumeration strategy to address challenges of counting the dispersed and mobile populations in these areas.

In nominated discrete communities the procedures included interviewing each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household using a tailored Interviewer Household Form (IHF) - and employing local people, where possible, to conduct the interview.

The 2011 Census was the first time that comprehensive information was collected about persons temporarily absent from the household where the IHF was being administered, including where those persons were likely to be. If people were reported as being away in a non-private dwelling where they were likely to have been counted (e.g. prison, boarding school), were away somewhere other than in a discrete community, or were away in another

state/ territory, they were considered 'out of scope' of the matching exercise and their status of temporarily absent on the IHF was retained. However, if they were likely to have been in another community and there was no record of them on IHFs collected from that other community, their status was coded by processing staff as being 'present' on the IHF where they were both usually resident and from where they were reported as being temporarily absent. This new procedure helped ensure that all persons who were enumerated on an IHF as 'temporarily absent' were accounted for.

## Other changes

In previous Censuses, people sleeping rough and enumerated on the Special Short Form were coded as lone person households usually resident at their place of enumeration. In 2011 they were coded as 'visitor-only households' having 'no usual address'. For more information see **ABS fact sheet: Change in processing - Special Short Form** on the ABS website.

In 2006 Census output, despite the quality controls in processing, there were about 700 people who were incorrectly classified as living in 'improvised home, tent, sleepers out' (they had moved into houses in a manufactured home estate or into new houses among other dwellings still under construction). There may have been other such mis-classification errors that remain undetected. In 2011 there was a more comprehensive review of the quality of coding of household forms for dwelling structures initially coded as 'improvised home, tent, sleepers out'.

Overall, about 860 dwellings with an initial classification of 'improvised home, tent, sleepers out' were corrected in 2011 Census processing. About 200 of the dwellings were in manufactured home estates, another 500 were reclassified as caravans or cabins, and about 100 were flats attached to a house, shop or office.

## Summary

The improvements to the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy will have improved the count of the Indigenous population and counted people away from home in a variety of contexts who might otherwise have been missed. However, it is not possible to determine whether an improvement in the overall enumeration of the Indigenous population had any impact on the quality of the estimates of homeless people who were Indigenous.

Similarly, the improvements in the Homelessness Enumeration Strategy will have improved the quality of the information available from the Census on which to base estimates of homelessness, particularly the expanded use of specialist field staff and the provision of additional lists of boarding houses. The extent of the improvement, compared to a counter-factual outcome from no change, cannot be estimated for the rough sleeper count nor for the 'couch surfer' promotional program. The impact of the extra lists of boarding houses provided for some jurisdictions in 2011 was relatively small. The improvements to the coding of 'improvised dwelling, tent, sleepers out' corrected the data in Census output for general use and avoided the necessity to correct it in homelessness estimation, but is unlikely to have made a significant difference to the homelessness estimates.

## Census and AIHW SHS Comparison (Appendix)

# APPENDIX 4 CENSUS AND AIHW SHS COMPARISON

## 2011 COMPARISON BETWEEN CENSUS ESTIMATE OF SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HOMELESS AND THE AIHW SHS COLLECTION

As in previous Censuses, in 2011 the ABS again used both a list strategy and a 'green sticker' strategy to supplement the ABS classification of dwellings that were supported accommodation for the homeless.

The lists of addresses of supported accommodation were provided from government bodies, individual Specialist Homeless Services (SHS) providers and umbrella homelessness services organisations. In 2011 ABS also sought information about what type of supported accommodation was provided, i.e. whether it was crisis or transitional housing etc. Some of the lists ABS received included this extra detail, some did not.

'Green Stickers' were sent to relevant organisations to distribute to dwellings such as refuges that were not on the address lists sent to the ABS. The green stickers were placed on the Census forms completed in those dwellings and mailed back to ABS, minimising contact with the local Census collector and maintaining both the confidentiality of the nature of the dwellings and the privacy of the people in those dwellings on Census night. On receipt of mail back forms (whether green stickered or not) collectors are advised that the form had been returned by post and not to return to the dwelling.

ABS enumerated 18,051 homeless people in dwellings that were either on the extra lists of supported accommodation or for which household forms were returned to ABS with green stickers affixed.

There were a further 3,207 people in dwellings enumerated by ABS as non-private dwellings (NPDs which are hostels for the homeless, night shelters and refuges), which were neither on the extra lists provided to ABS nor for which were any household forms returned to ABS with green stickers attached.

Together these strategies resulted in 21,258 homeless people being enumerated in supported accommodation for the homeless in 2011.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has provided ABS with some Specialist Homeless Services Collection (SHSC) data, for validation purposes, which are preliminary estimates of the number of people reported by SHS providers to have been in SHS accommodation on Census night (table A4.1 below). The SHSC data which AIHW provided relate to a single day (9 August 2011) that was relatively early in the SHSC period of progressive implementation of reporting by agencies, and the AIHW have indicated that due to this progressive implementation the SHSC data are underestimated by about out 6 to 7% nationally, although the underestimate varies by jurisdiction. In addition, the AIHW has advised that a number of jurisdictions have changed their service delivery models which may have affected both the actual and reported levels of accommodation.

The estimates from the Census are higher in total for Australia than the AIHW SHSC estimates, and higher for most jurisdictions except notably New South Wales and Western Australia.

### A4.1 2011 Census supported accommodation estimates and AIHW SHS provider estimates for reported accommodation on Census night

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	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
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Census supported accommodation estimates	4 926	7 845	3 784	1 620	931	480	571	1 105	21 258
SHS provider reports - persons accommodated on Census night	5 760	4 408	3 453	778	1 414	500	544	1 018	17 874
Census less SHS	-834	3 437	331	842	-483	-20	27	87	3 384

Source: **ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing; AIHW SHS Data Collection**

It might at first be thought that the extra 3,207 people enumerated in the Census NPDs, which were neither on the extra lists provided to ABS nor for which there were any household forms returned to ABS with green stickers attached, account for the difference between the two sources. However, about 1,000 of those 3,207 extra people were in NSW, and yet the Census estimate for 2011 for NSW is still well short of the SHS reported number. Similarly, 37% of the Census estimate for WA is accounted for by the NPDs and yet the Census estimate still falls short of the SHS reports.

The jurisdictions where the Census estimate exceeds the 2011 SHS report by the most are Victoria, where the NPDs contribute just 730 of the 3,437 difference, and SA, where they contribute less than 150 of the 842 difference. ABS further assessed the quality of its 2011 Census estimates for those two jurisdictions by comparison with the estimates for 2006 (see table A4.2).

#### **A4.2 2006 Census supported accommodation estimates and AIHW SAAP estimates for reported accommodation on Census night**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Census supported accommodation estimates	3 867	6 929	3 065	1 474	1 088	224	221	461	17 329
SAAP - persons accommodated on Census night	4 140	4 027	2 621	1 500	1 116	379	293	441	14 517
Census less SAAP	-273	2 902	444	-26	-28	-155	-72	20	2 812

Source: **ABS, 2006 Census of Population and Housing; AIHW SAAP Data Collection**

For Australia the increase in the Census based estimate in supported accommodation has risen by 23%. The SHSC Census night number for 2011 is up 23% on the 2006 SAAP data report, before any adjustment for the likely 6 to 7% underestimate early in the SHSC implementation period. Overall, the SHSC estimate might be expected to be 30% above the 2006 SAAP estimate, including both growth over time and the widened scope of the SHS collection in 2011.

For Victoria, the Census based SAAP estimate in 2006 was 6,929, including people in Transitional Housing Management properties (THMs). The AIHW reported SAAP estimate in 2006 was 4,027 people on Census night and excluded THMs. The Census based estimate for Victoria has risen 13% from 2006 to 2011. However, the SHSC estimate for 2011 is up 9%. While a yet to be conducted more detailed review of the SHSC and Census comparisons by finer levels of geography will be informative, the Census based estimates appear to be consistent over time.

Similarly for South Australia, Census based estimate for supported accommodation in 2006 was very close to the SAAP reported estimate and has risen 10% from 2006 to 2011 and appears to be consistent over time. The SHSC underestimate was most significant for South Australia due to the way they progressively reported client information. The SHSC estimate

for 2011 is only half (52%) of the former SAAP estimate for 2006.

For New South Wales the Census data show more modest growth (27%) between 2006 and 2011, compared to the 39% growth in the SHSC to SAAP comparison. The picture for WA is a little different. The Census data recorded a fall of 14% while SHSC / SAAP comparison showed a 27% rise.

AIHW and ABS will work through the comparisons of the Census and SHSC data at finer levels of geography and publish a short update on the findings.

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